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ABSTRACT

This study guide was developed for teachers and students participating in the Peace Corps World Wise Schools program. The primary purpose of the study guide series is to enhance each class's correspondence with its Peace Corps Volunteer and to help students gain a greater understanding of regions and cultures different from their own. The specific purpose of the guide on Lithuania is to provide teachers and students with a structured approach to learning about people and places in Lithuania, one of the newly-independent countries of the former Soviet Union. Divided into three sections, part 1, "Information for Teachers," provides background information on Peace Corps, geography themes and an introduction to Lithuania. Part 2, "Activities," features supplemental activities grouped for three academic levels, grades 3-5, grades 6-9, and grades 10-12. Part 3, "Resources," provides a variety of resources including worksheets, maps and a 23-item bibliography. The lessons can be used across different grade levels. Students should be able to identify patterns of culture and geography, thus broadening their understanding of other countries. (EH)

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WorldWise
SCHOOLS

Destination: Lithuania
Study Guide

SO 025 198

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Destination: Lithuania

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WWS 21T-94

About the Guide

Since 1961, Peace Corps Volunteers have been providing the people of other countries with the knowledge and skills necessary to improve their standard of living. At the same time, Volunteers have helped others around the world to learn more about the United States. In turn, the Peace Corps has also helped to increase our awareness and understanding of societies and cultures outside the United States.

One of the most effective methods of teaching others about the countries and communities where Peace Corps Volunteers live and work is the World Wise Schools program. This unique program facilitates communication between current Peace Corps Volunteers and teachers and students across the United States. This *Destination: Lithuania* guide and others in our series were produced by World Wise Schools to provide teachers and students with a structured approach to learning about people and places around the world. Since much of the information in our guides is from current or former Peace Corps sources, teachers and students using this guide will receive a unique and contemporary view of Lithuania, one of the newly-independent countries of the former Soviet Union.

The *Destination: Lithuania* guide is divided into three sections. Part I provides background information on Peace Corps, geography themes and Lithuania. Part II features supplemental activities, which have been grouped by three academic levels: grades 3-5, grades 6-9, and grades 10-12. Part III offers you resources, such as worksheets, maps, and a bibliography. Because activities and readings designated for one grade level can easily be used for others, we encourage you to read through all three levels.

Along with the other World Wise Schools guides, *Destination: Lithuania* provides information that enables students to identify patterns of culture and geography, thereby broadening their understanding of other countries. Use this guide as a starting point for research and discussion on the country in which <u>your</u> Peace Corps Volunteer lives.

With all educational materials, evaluation and revision are an ongoing process. World Wise Schools welcomes comments on all of its materials and encourages you to share with us the activities you or your colleagues develop and find effective.

Welcome to Lithuania!

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Part I: Information for Teachers

Peace Corps

The Peace Corps was created when President John F. Kennedy issued an Executive Order on March 1, 1961.

Since that time, over 140,000 Volunteers have helped people in other countries develop skills to fight hunger, disease and poverty, and to improve their standard of living. In return, Volunteers have seen themselves, their country, and the world from a new perspective. Peace Corps, seeking to promote world peace and friendship, has three goals:

1. To help the people of interested countries meet their needs for trained men and women;

2. To help promote a better understanding of the people of the United States on the part of the people served; and,

3. To promote a better understanding of other people on the part of the people of the United States.

Since the first group of Volunteers arrived in Ghana, West Africa, in 1961, Peace Corps Volunteers have served in more than 100 countries. Although programs vary from country to country, based on the nation's needs and requests, Volunteers traditionally offer skills in the areas of education, agriculture, business, engineering, community development, natural resources, and health. Recent program additions have included environmental education, special education, and the development of programs aimed at improving the status of women and their families.

Before placement at their sites, Volunteers receive training in the language and culture of their host countries, as well as in specific technical skills. Cross-cultural training, which includes the study of the history, customs, and values of the host country, prepares Volunteers to become part of a local community for the duration of their two-year service.

Today, more than 6,500 Peace Corps Volunteers are working in over 90 countries around the globe. Although the average age of Volunteers in 1961 was twenty-two, today it is approximately thirty-one; in fact, one out of eight current Volunteers is over the age of fifty. By living and working within their local communities, Peace Corps Volunteers not only learn about the people of their host country, but also offer people around the world a chance to learn firsthand about the people of the United States. Volunteers also support the third goal of Peace Corps: teaching citizens of the United States about the people and culture of their host countries.

World Wise Schools promotes the third goal of Peace Corps by matching current Volunteers with third through twelfth grade classes throughout the United States in an information exchange. The program, which began in 1989, promotes geographic and cross-cultural awareness while developing the spirit of volunteerism. Today almost 4500 classes from all fifty states are enrolled in the program.

When Peace Corps Volunteers return from overseas, they bring an intimate knowledge of other peoples and cultures. They understand that the ability of the United States to function in the world community depends on its understanding of other cultures. They know that global interdependence is a reality, not just a catchword. When Volunteers share their experiences with their World Wise classes, they help others to fashion a broader world view.

Fundamental Themes of Geography

Location:
Position on the Earth's Surface

All locations can be defined as precise points on the earth's surface identified by a grid system of latitude and longitude (absolute location). Location can also be communicated by describing a place in relationship to other places (relative location). Students learn about location when asked to:

- use direction, distance, scale, and standard symbols on a map;
- use a number/letter system or latitude and longitude to locate places on maps;
- suggest reasons for the location of a city, road, factory, school, or store.

Place:
Physical and Human Characteristics

All places on the earth have distinctive features that give them meaning and character and distinguish them from other places. Places may be characterized by their physical features (climate and land forms) and human characteristics (population, settlement, and economics). Students learn about place when asked to:

- describe different kinds of shelters based on environment and culture;
- use text references and maps to describe the climatic characteristics of a nation or region;
- analyze a place based on a song, picture, or story.

Relationships within Places:
Humans and their Environments

Understanding the impact of humans on the environment involves learning about the physical and social factors that produce environmental change. People modify or adapt to natural settings in ways that reveal their cultural values, economic and political circumstances, and technological abilities. Students learn about relationships within places when asked to:

- evaluate how people use the physical environment to meet their needs;
- analyze the relationship between the use of natural resources and the economy of a region;
- describe environmental changes resulting from the use of tools and technology.

Movement: Humans Interacting on Earth

People interact with each other both locally and globally by travel, communication, and the exchange of goods and services. Visible evidence of global interdependence and the interaction of humans and places includes the movement of people, ideas, and materials. Students learn about movement when asked to:

- explain how the need for natural resources encouraged exploration and settlement;
- define examples of cultural borrowing and cultural diffusion;
- predict the impact of migration on an area.

Regions: How They Form and Change

A region is an area that displays unity in terms of selected characteristics that distinguish it from other areas. Some regions are defined by one characteristic such as government, language, or land; others by the interplay of many criteria. Regions may be redefined as criteria change. Students learn about regions when asked to:

- use selected criteria to outline geographic regions on maps;
- compare political, economic and social differences among regions;
- evaluate how the boundaries of a region might change.

Adopted with permission from Maryland Geographic Alliance and Baltimore County (Maryland) Public School teachers.

Lithuania: An Overview

Physical Geography

The Republic of Lithuania lies in the western part of the East European Plain. Situated on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea in north central Europe, Lithuania has an area of 65,200 square kilometers (25,165 square miles). Lithuania is slightly larger than the U.S. state of West Virginia and slightly smaller than Denmark. It is bound by Latvia to the north, Belarus to the east and south, Poland to the southwest, Kaliningrad Oblast (a Russian territory) to the southwest, and the Baltic Sea to the west.

The low-lying coastal area along the Baltic coast, known as the Pajurio Lowland, extends some 15-20 kilometers from the sea. To the east of this coastal plain lies the Zemaiciu Upland, which rises to a height of 234 meters at Medvgalis. The Upland is separated from the Baltic Highlands of the south and east by a long plain across the central regions called the Middle Lowland. Agriculture and forestry have long been important in these regions.

Lithuania is criss-crossed by a dense network of waterways. The longest and largest river is the Nemunas, which flows east to west and empties into the Baltic Sea. The vast network of rivers which lead to the Baltic Sea have provided important links from the cities and villages to the coast.

Vegetation and Wildlife

Lithuania's forests, which are mostly mixed deciduous and coniferous trees, occupy approximately 28 percent of the country. The predominant trees are pines, birches and firs; alders, asps, oaks, and ash-trees are also found. Lumber from these forests is used in the furniture industry.

Mushrooms grow throughout the country's forests. Gathering mushrooms in the fall is a favorite pastime for Lithuanians. Mushrooms appear as a staple food in the daily diet and during special holidays and ceremonies.

Lithuania's wildlife is similar to that of northwestern Europe. The wooded areas are inhabited by wolves, boars, elk, hares and other animals. Approximately 293 species of birds have been registered in Lithuania with most being native to the area. The most frequently found birds include ducks, pigeons, storks, woodpeckers, swallows, jackdaws, magpies, crows, larks, hawks, and sparrows.

The flora and fauna of Lithuania have been important in folk tales, songs, myths, and legends.

Climate

Lithuania is in the temperate climate zone. Temperatures range from an average in January of -3 Centigrade (27 degrees Fahrenheit) to a July mean of 16 Centigrade (61 Fahrenheit). Lithuania receives from 53 centimeters to 86 centimeters (21 inches to 34 inches) of rainfall a year. Although most rain falls in August, October is the period of greatest rainfall on the coastline.

Ethnic Regions

As small a country as it is, Lithuania has a great deal of diversity in dialects, folklore, dances, songs and crafts. There are four major ethnic regions in Lithuania: Aukstaitija (central and eastern Lithuania), Zemaitija (western Lithuania), Dzukija (southeastern Lithuania on both sides of the Nemunas River), and Suvalkija (south of the Nemunas River). The largest regions are Aukstaitija and Zemaitija. These ethnic regions were generally formed along political, economic and sometimes even religious lines.

Aukstaitija and the North: This region of Lithuania lies in the north, above Kaunas and Vilnius (the major cities), and between the Nemunas and Neris rivers and the Latvian border. The largest ethnic region, it includes the fertile Central Plain and the undulating hills and lakes of eastern Lithuania. This region was known for growing flax and still has the largest flax mill in the Baltics. Aukstaitija has two distinct physical regions: a rather flat western area and a hilly eastern area which has the greatest snowfall in the country.

Zemaitija and the Coast: The province of Zemaitija which includes all the coast, covers about a quarter of Lithuania and roughly corresponds with the Zemaitija Upland. Historically, the Zemaiciai lived around the mouth of the Nemunas River. On this coast there is archaeological evidence of Roman and Viking presence and Bronze-age trade with Britain and the Mediterranean. The Zemaiciai maintain a strong regional dialect and have not been greatly influenced by recent changes.

Most of the countryside of the Zemaitija is rather severe, and the western slope of the Upland is windier, foggier and wetter than elsewhere. Trees in this area are mostly firs and once-sacred oaks, and the landscape is dotted with roadside shrines and cemeteries.

The people of each region are proud of their ethnic heritage and traditions.

People and Culture

The total estimated population of Lithuania as of January 1993 was 3,751,000 with 80 percent of the population being Lithuanian. Other ethnic groups include Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Tartars, and Latvians.

Lithuanian is part of the Indo-European family of languages but distinct from the Slavic and Germanic branches. Of all the living Indo-European languages, only Lithuanian has retained its ancient phonetic and structural characteristics and a complicated system of word derivations. It is generally recognized that the Aukstaitian and Zemaitian dialects are the main dialects of the Lithuanian language. The Aukstaitian dialect is the common literary dialect used.

Contemporary Lithuanian culture represents a synthesis of ancient tradition, Christianity, and Western modernism. Christianity came to Lithuania in the 14th century but never completely replaced the old ways. Despite the changes of Western modernism, the old Lithuanian world view has remained alive in contemporary cultural expression.

The rich heritage of folk art, songs and dances, and ancient Baltic mythology, remain a source of inspiration for modern creators. Colorful woven fabrics are still worn as national costumes, miniature crosses carved from wood are found in homes throughout the countryside, and lively folk dances and songs are still performed by both young and old. The present is closely meshed with the past, which maintains the continuity and unique identity of the people.

Lithuanians emigrated to the United States during the early 1900s seeking a better life economically. Some immigrants remained while others returned to Lithuania with earnings and the ability to purchase land or better their lives in Lithuania.

During World War II, many people became refugees fleeing Lithuania. After the war, many Lithuanians emigrated to Australia, Canada, South America, and the United States. Most of the Lithuanians in the U.S. settled in cities, such as New York, Brooklyn, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, and the smaller towns in Connecticut and Massachusetts which had established Lithuanian communities. This generation of post-World War II Lithuanian-American immigrants consisted of professionals, teachers, soldiers, writers, doctors, artists, farmers, and businessmen.

When they arrived in the United States, they found well-established Lithuanian organizations, parishes, schools, publishing houses, newspapers, choirs, and theater groups which pre-war immigrants had created. Currently almost 880,000 Lithuanian-Americans live in the United States.

History

The first historical mention of the people who lived near the Baltic Sea was made in the first century by the Roman historian Tacitus, who reported that the Baltic people sold amber to the Romans.

The year 1236 AD is generally designated as the beginning of the Lithuanian state. Separate principalities were united by Duke Mindaugas, who was converted to Christianity in 1251. These lands formed the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Mindaugas was crowned the nation's first king. Grand Duke Gediminas, who ruled from 1316 to 1341, established a dynasty (the Gediminaiciai) which ruled Lithuania until 1572. He founded Vilnius where he built his hilltop castle overlooking the Neris and Vilnia rivers.

The territory of the Lithuanian state expanded to the east during the rule of Grand Duke Algirdas (1345-77) but was frequently under attack from the German Livonian and Teutonic Orders. In 1385, in response to the continued German threat, Grand Duke Jogaila and the Polish Princess Jadvyga married and formed an alliance between the two states. As a condition of the union, Lithuania adopted Christianity.

Under Jogaila's successor, Grand Duke Vytautas the Great, the territory of the Grand Duchy expanded far to the south, covering what are now Belarus and Ukrainian lands, and some regions of western Russia. Vytautas the Great is regarded as one of the most outstanding personalities in Lithuanian history. He was a man of vision and wisdom, a promoter of commerce and industry, a builder of roads, and a champion of racial and religious tolerance. Vytautas the Great elevated the Lithuanian state to a rank equal to that of the great European powers of the period.

In 1569, to counter the growing threat from the east, Lithuania united with Poland in the Union of Lublin, creating a Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth headed by a single king who was elected by the nobility of both nations. In most other respects the administrations of the two countries remained separate and distinct. The union, however, did not prevent the decline of the state, which continued for the following two centuries. The principal reason appears to have been a rise of the nobility to power without a strong, united central policy. Wars and internal strife weakened the Commonwealth further until it was partitioned by Russia, Prussia, and Austria in the 18th century.

With the last partition in 1795, most of Lithuania fell to Russia. Uprisings against Russian rule were suppressed and a policy of "russification" was conducted. In 1865, after a major revolt, the printing of Lithuanian books using the Latin alphabet was outlawed. This prohibition fueled a tremendous Lithuanian national revival. The ban on printing books was lifted in 1904.

During World War I, Lithuania was occupied by Nazi troops. Despite the occupation, a Lithuanian Conference convened and demanded the establishment of an independent Lithuanian state. The Conference elected a Lithuanian Council, headed by Antanas Smetona, and proceeded to declare its independence in February of 1918. The new state survived a Soviet attempt to create a Lithuanian-Belarusian Soviet Republic and a late Polish campaign aimed at reincorporating Lithuania within Poland. At the end of 1920 Poland annexed the region of Vilnius (Wilno), although the rest of Lithuania was considered an independent state. Kaunas became the new capital.

Soviet Russia recognized Lithuanian independence in the Treaty of Moscow, which was signed on July 20, 1920, and Lithuania became a member of the League of Nations in 1922. During this period of independence, Lithuania made great strides. The economy was reconstructed, a system of national education was created, and considerable success in agriculture was attained.

In March 1939, the Nazis seized part of Lithuania. Lithuanians tried to restore their democracy, but failed. The Treaty on Friendship and Existing Borders, which was signed by the Nazis and Soviets, permitted the Soviet Union to take control of Lithuania. Lithuania was forced to agree to the stationing of Soviet troops on its territory.

In return, the Soviet Union granted the city of Vilnius to Lithuania. Lithuania was proclaimed the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic in July of 1940. The establishment of Soviet rule was followed by the arrest and imprisonment of many Lithuanian politicians and government officials. It is said that during the period of June 14-18, 1941, 12,000 people were deported to Siberia.

The Nazi invasion in June of 1941 ended the process of 'sovietization', but a regime of greater brutality began.

The Nazi regime ended in 1944 when the Soviet army returned and Soviet rule was re-introduced. Agriculture was collectivized, rapid industrialization was implemented, and some 350,000 people were deported. Churches closed, Lithuanian political parties were disbanded and exclusive political power became the preserve of the Lithuanian branch of the Communist Party.

During the years 1944-1952, an underground movement was established which tried to restore democracy once again. Thousands were killed or sent to labor camps in Siberia for their political beliefs or as punishment for resisting Soviet rule.

With the introduction of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of *glasnost* in the mid 1980s, a limited discussion of previously censored aspects of Lithuanian history appeared in the press. Dissident groups took advantage of a more tolerant attitude to political protests by staging demonstrations. One such celebration, of the 70th anniversary of Lithuanian independence, was stopped by the Soviet army and police. This act and the general dismay among the intelligentsia at the slow pace of reform in the Republic led to the formation of the Lithuanian Movement for Reconstruction called *Sajudis*. Sajudis' goal was to give Lithuania complete control of its economy, citizenship requirements, education and cultural development.

In 1989, Lithuania's parliament expressed commitment to independence. It declared Lithuanian as the official language and allowed freedom of speech and religion. On March 11, 1990, the Lithuanian parliament declared independence from the Soviet Union and elected Vytautas Landsbergis as its chairman (de facto President). The Soviet government demonstrated its disapproval by instituting an embargo on oil, medical supplies, and many other goods. Under pressure from Western nations, the Soviets and Lithuanians negotiated. The Soviets agreed to restore shipments, while Lithuania agreed to temporarily suspend its declaration of independence.

After the unsuccessful Russian coup against Mikhail Gorbachev, Lithuania pressed for recognition of its independence. Finally, in September of 1991, the Soviet government recognized Lithuanian independence. The country joined the United Nations, and in February 1992 the United States reopened the embassy it had closed in 1940.

Economy

Due to its temperate climate and fertile soil, Lithuania has generally been an agricultural country. Agriculture accounts for about a fourth of the country's economic output. Main agricultural crops have traditionally included cereals, legumes, potatoes, vegetables, fodder crops, sugar beets, and flax. Lithuanian farmers also raise cattle; orchards produce apples, pears and plums. Every city and town is encircled with a ring of small plots of land where city and town dwellers grow fruit trees, berries, vegetables and flowers for their own personal use. Agriculture and the love of the land has influenced generations in their songs and dances and has resulted in a deep respect for nature.

During the period of independence before World War II (1918-1940), the productivity of private agriculture almost doubled. The war and Soviet occupation drastically slowed and altered the course of economic growth. Lithuania is an industrialized country with 69 percent of the population living and working in the cities and 22 percent of the labor force employed in agriculture. The rest of the people earn their livelihood from industrial, scientific, and commercial activities in both urban and rural settings.

Today, Lithuania is in the process of dismantling a Soviet-imposed economy. An intensive program of privatization has turned over 90 percent of the housing stock and 80 percent of small, retail enterprises to private owners, and state industrial enterprises are being sold to private investors. An extensive program of one-time, state-issued vouchers has given the population an opportunity to become owners of property and capital.

The country has adopted laws favorable to foreign investors and once again has a convertible currency, the *litas*. A network of private, commercial banks exists. Although 64 percent of the labor force is still employed by the state sector, the number of new private companies continues to grow, expanding the free market sector. During this transition period, Lithuania has been able to maintain a positive trade balance by increasing its trade relations with Western nations. Major international donors and lenders are providing support to Lithuania as it restructures its economy.

Government

The Republic of Lithuania is organized as a democratic parliamentary republic with three branches of government: legislative, executive and judicial.

Legislative: The highest legislative body of state power is the Seimas, a one-chamber parliament. The Seimas consists of 141 deputies who are elected for terms of four years by direct popular vote. The purpose of the Seimas as stated in the Constitution is to debate and adopt amendments to the Constitution, enact legislation affecting all sectors of society, regulate the activities undertaken by the government, establish and approve the state budgets, and investigate and remove state officials for any violation or breach of their duties.

Executive: The executive branch of the Lithuanian government consists of a president, a prime minister, and 16 ministries, which carry out the administrative functions of the government. The president is elected for a term of five years by direct popular vote. The current president is Algirdas Brazauskas.

Judicial: The Lithuanian judiciary is made up of a Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals of Lithuania, and district courts. The judiciary also includes a nine-member Constitutional Court.

Education

Public education in Lithuania is organized into schools of general education, vocational schools, and college-type and polytechnical

institutions. The schools of general education include kindergartens and primary and secondary schools, which include grades one through twelve. Lithuanian children are required to attend school from the age of six to the age of sixteen. There are over 2000 schools of general education.

Schools are found in all cities, towns, and outlying villages. The schools in the outlying villages generally begin with first grade and end at fifth and ninth grades. Students are often enrolled in art or music schools, as well as academic school. Most students attend primary school and secondary school at public institutions. After secondary education, most students attend a vocational school, the next greatest percentage attend college-type institutions, and the remainder attend the polytechnical institutions. In 1992-93, most teachers working in Lithuanian schools had trained at the polytechnical schools while a small percentage had trained at a college-type institution majoring in education or pedagogy.

Since independence, over 67 percent of the students attend religious education classes in the general schools. Along with religious education, students study a wide variety of subjects: History, mathematics, science, ethics, foreign languages (which include English, German, Russian, French and Latin for the accelerated classes), Lithuanian, and Lithuanian literature. Foreign language study begins in fifth grade with English being a primary language of study.

Few of the schools have organized sports teams, but there are a number of extra-curricular activities including chess, math, drama, foreign language, and dance. The school day usually contains seven periods of 45 minutes each with 10-minute breaks and one 20-minute lunch period. Schedules vary depending on the school, its size and whether it is in a city or in a village.

Some of the schools require uniforms and young girls often wear their hair in braids with large bows. Students carry book bags or knapsacks and use graph paper journals for all of their writing. Textbooks are in short supply, especially in schools of higher learning. Professors in the universities teach from lecture notes which they are now beginning to revise and update. Students are required to take careful notes since textbooks are not available. Tests are given orally or written on the blackboard, since paper is in short supply and duplicating machines are nearly nonexistent in schools. The technology known in many U.S. schools has not reached schools in Lithuania.

Currently the curriculum is in flux as teachers try to offer a wider variety of subjects and de-emphasize Soviet history and Russian language learning. Teachers themselves are beginning to attend summer workshops which are being offered by teacher volunteers from the United States. The universities are also beginning to change their curricular and administrative structures. One university has reopened with a board of directors formed from deans and professors of Lithuanian descent living and working in the United States.

Very few students have part-time jobs after school since they are expected to help their parents work in the family "kitchen garden" or at a relative's farm in a nearby village, or with housework. In the evening after work and homework, many young people enjoy watching MTV or U.S. soap operas.

Salaries for teachers are extremely low, and fewer and fewer students are choosing teaching as a career. People believe that business is a much better way to earn a living.

The overview has been adapted from the following: The Lithuanians, Kudirka, Jouzas. Vilnius, Lithuania: Lithuania Folk Culture Center, 1991; and Doing Business in Lithuania, Economic Affairs Council. Los Angeles, California: Lithuania-American Community, 1993.

Part II: Activities

Activities: Grades 3-5

I. Where in the World?

Focus:
Location of Lithuania in relation to the United States and to Europe.

Resources:
- Map of the world, p. 73
- Current map of Europe, p. 72
- Worksheet, "True or False: Lithuania and United States," p. 46
- Worksheet, "Where is It?" p. 47

Background:
Lithuania regained its independence on March 11, 1990 after 50 years as a republic of the Soviet Union. Before beginning this unit, you may wish to refer to "Lithuania: An Overview," in the information for teachers, for historical and geographic information.

Activities:
1. Distribute the map of the world and a current map of Europe and have students examine them. The following are questions for discussion:

   - Can you identify the seven continents on the world map? (You may need to write the names on the board for younger students.)
   - What is the difference between a continent and a country?
   - How many countries on the continents of North America and Europe can you name? Label the United States on the world map.

   Write "Lithuania" on the board.

   - Where is Lithuania on the map of Europe? Label or color it.
   - Where is Lithuania on the map of the world? Label or color it.

   Have students make some very basic predictions about Lithuania (e.g., climate, diet, kind of clothing, seasons) based on their preliminary understanding of its location. Tell them they will be able to check their predictions as they learn more about Lithuania in the units to come.

2. Using the world map:

   - Have students describe Lithuania's location in relation to the United States (and vice versa) using cardinal directions.
   - Have students draw a direct route from their approximate location in the United States to Lithuania and calculate the distance traveled in miles and kilometers. Ask students to list what countries and large bodies of water they would cross en route to Lithuania.
   - Distribute the worksheet, "True or False: Lithuania and the United States" which makes comparisons between Lithuania and the United States. Discuss responses.

Answers to worksheet:

1. *True*	2. *False*	3. *True*	4. *False*	5. *True*
6. *False*	7. *False*	8. *False*	9. *False*	10. *True*

3. Using the current map of Europe:

   - Have students complete the worksheet, "Where Is It?" which describes Lithuania's location in relation to other European countries. Discuss responses.

Extension:

1. Have students locate and color your Volunteer's country on the world map.

   - What continent is it part of?
   - How far is it from Lithuania?
   - How far is it from the United States?
   - Which country is it closer to?

2. Have students describe your Volunteer's country in relation to Lithuania using cardinal directions.

   - What geographic characteristics, if any, does it share with Lithuania (e.g., both are small countries north of the Equator)?

II. Visiting Lithuania

Focus:
Regional and cultural characteristics of Lithuania.

Resources:
- Map of the world, p. 73
- Map of Lithuania, p. 71
- Reading, "What's the Weather?" p. 48
- Reading, "Lithuania: Sights to See," p. 49
- Lithuanian letters, "What U.S. Students Should Know About Lithuania," pp. 40-41
- Map showing time zones (not provided)

Background:
Many Lithuanian people emigrated by boat to New York's Ellis Island during the 1900s. Some of these early immigrants returned to Lithuania. During the time Lithuania was a Soviet Republic, independent travel to and from Lithuania was restricted. A visa was required and difficult to obtain, and mail was censored because the Soviet government did not want outside influences on the people.

Activities:
1. Have students plan a ten-day trip from their location in the United States to Lithuania. Distribute the world map and time zone map. Have pairs of students draw on the map the direct air route from the United States to Lithuania. (Note: This activity could be more sophisticated if students traced a path from the nearest airport to New York then to Vilnius, Lithuania.) With information from a local travel agent, students could calculate the following:

   - Distance in miles/km from their airport or New York to Vilnius
   - Number of time zones crossed
   - Approximate number of hours in transit
   - Cost of the whole class to travel to Lithuania

2. Have students decide what time of year they want to take their ten-day trip using the reading, "What's the Weather?" Depending on their abilities, have them either make a list of the reasons why they chose the time of year they did or write a short paragraph stating their reasons.

3. Have students individually or in groups plan their ten-day in-country itinerary using the information from Lithuanian Letters, "What U.S. Students Should Know About Lithuania;" the reading, "Lithuania--Sights to See;" the chart, "Personal Travel Plans;" and the map of Lithuania. Have them illustrate their route on the map and, in writing, address the following:

   - How and when would you go to Lithuania?
   - Where would you want to go and in what order?
   - How many days would you stay in each place?
   - What would you do in each place?

4. Have students consider the specific things they need or want to take for their tour of Lithuania. Tell them the items necessary for their trip must fit in a backpack. Students should take into account the season in which they are traveling as well as the geographic location of the activities they are interested in pursuing. They should consider types of clothing required as well as any special gear and be prepared to give reasons for their choices. Remind students that they will need to take money, too. (Exchange Rate: $1.00 U.S. = 4.00 *litas*.) Encourage students to brainstorm a list, and then prioritize items if they can.

   Following are more questions to consider:

   - What small souvenirs from the United States or your region would you bring to give to Lithuanian friends you make on your journey? Why would you choose these particular things?
   - If you lost the backpack in Lithuania, which of all the items in your backpack do you think you could replace in Lithuania? Which, if any, might you not be able to replace except in the United States? Why?
   - If you brought $100 for spending money, how many *litas* would you have?

5. To complete the trip to Lithuania, show the video, "Destination: Lithuania' to your students. Have them design and write a postcard to a friend "back home" in the United States telling about a Lithuanian place they "visited" on their video tour. Post the cards in your classroom.

Extension:

1. Have students work in small groups to decide what U.S. (or regional) sights Lithuanian visitors might particularly like to see. Brainstorm a list, then prioritize. Share the list with the class. Have students explain how they used their knowledge about Lithuania's geography and culture in deciding what U.S. sights to recommend. Have students write letters to imaginary Lithuanian counterparts in an exercise similar to the Lithuanian letters in the resource section of this study guide.

2. Adapt the preceding activity as if selecting U.S. sites of particular interest for a visitor from your Volunteer's country. Have students compare the places they recommend this person visit with the places they recommended for the Lithuanians. Would anything be different?

3. Ask your Volunteer what attractions he or she would take your class to see if they were able to visit that country.

4. As a class, discuss the items you would pack if visiting your Volunteer in his or her country. Keep in mind demands of climate and customs. Send the list to your Volunteer and ask for comments.

5. Inquire about currency in your Volunteer's country. Ask if it would be possible for him or her to send your class some pencil rubbings of local coins. Can your Volunteer explain the cultural significance of any symbols or emblems on the coins?

III. A Lithuanian Folktale

Focus:
How a traditional Lithuanian story reveals aspects of Lithuanian culture and geography.

Resources:
- Reading, "Egle, Queen of the Grass Snakes," pp. 50-51

Background:
From primitive times, the primary occupation of the Lithuanian people has been agriculture. As a result, agriculture is a major theme in Lithuania's rich oral history of folktales, legends, riddles and proverbs. Ancient Lithuanians worshipped nature and its forces. They believed that gods and goddesses, Saule (Sune), Perkunas (Thunder), Menulis (Moon), Ausrine (Dawn), Zeme (Earth), had power over crops and livestock.

Lithuanian folktales are also influenced by the country's geography. Many tales are set at the seashore or in the forest. Characters in the folktales are often named after trees, animals, or gods and goddesses. The Lithuanian gemstone, amber, represents tears in the folktale, "The Legend of Jurate and Kastytis" (see "Golden 'Gem' of the Ages" in the section for grades 6-9).

Activities:
1. Introduce folktales by reading the following passage to your students as a listening exercise and then asking them for examples of folktales from the United States or from their own families.

> Folktales are stories first told long ago that have been passed down from one generation to the next by word of mouth. No story is ever told exactly the same way twice because it grows and changes with each new telling. Some stories are unique to the culture from which they come, and others find variations in many countries of the world. Folktales have some common elements which occur all over the world. They are:
>
> - a hero or heroine who has a humble beginning and becomes a prince or princess;
> - a quest to perform impossible tasks;
> - a trickster;
> - a magical helper;
> - a suitor who wins the hand of the princess;
> - a heroine who loses the hero to a treacherous rival;
> - a lesson that is learned or wisdom that is taught.

2. Distribute the reading, "Egle, Queen of the Grass Snakes." Read the folktale aloud or have selected students read it aloud. Following are some questions about the folktale for discussion:

   - What parts of this story could have really happened? What parts are fanciful or make-believe?
   - Why do you think Egle did not want to marry the grass snake? Do you think she was happy once she did?

- Do you know any other folktales where a girl must marry against her wishes or where she marries something that is not human? How are those stories similar or dissimilar to this one?
- Why did Egle's brothers kill the grass snake? Do you think they were right to do so? What might have been another solution to the problem ?
- Why was the daughter turned into a quivering aspen? Did she do anything wrong?
- What promises were made in this story? How were they broken? What happened? Is it ever right not to keep a promise? Can you think of other folktales in which promises made were broken?
- Can you think of any other folktales that have their characters turn into something other than people?

3. Discuss Egle's life under the sea with your students:

   - Why is the sea is so important to this story?
   - Was the sea a nice place to be in this story? Describe the palace.
   - What is amber? How can you tell from the story that amber is something the Lithuanians value very highly?

   Ask students to draw their version of Egle's palace under the sea, based on the description in the story.

4. Assign small groups of students to each research one of the five trees mentioned at the story's close (trembling poplar, oak, ash, birch and fir tree). Have each group member write a brief description of the tree and its leaves and note the type of environment in which it grows. Have them draw a picture of the tree as well.

   Recombine students in groups of five so that each group member is an expert on a different type of tree. Have each report on the tree he or she knows about. Then have students work together to come to some predictions about Lithuania's physical geography (climate, terrain, etc.) based on what they know about the trees growing there. Have each group share their ideas with the class. Interested students may want to illustrate the story's end, depicting the characters turning into the specific trees. Have them write a brief explanation to accompany their drawing.

5. Have your students create different endings for this tale. Have students share these stories in small groups or with the class.

Extension:

1. Ask your Volunteer whether he or she knows any folktales from his or her country. Ask if one can be sent.

2. Tell your Volunteer about the way some Lithuanians have traditionally decorated the exteriors of their homes with carvings.

   - Do the people in his or her country have traditional ways of decorating their homes? If so, what do they do? What materials are used? Where do these materials come from?

Activities: Grades 6-9

I. Rebirth of a Nation

Focus:
Challenges raised by independence.

Resources:
- Map of pre-1991 Europe, (not provided)
- Current map of Europe, p. 72
- Lithuanian letters, "Lithuania Now," p. 42

Background:
During the mid 1980s, changes began to occur in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev began calling for more openness in Soviet society. He promoted two policies of reform: one, *glasnost* (openness), was related to social and political reform, and the second, *perestroika*, was related to economic reform. These policies sparked freedom movements in the countries of the Eastern bloc. By the time of Mikhail Gorbachev's resignation, 12 republics had become independent countries.

Independence has brought new challenges to Lithuania. During the Soviet occupation, jobs were guaranteed, retirements were paid by the state, and the flow of products was strictly controlled from Moscow. A generation of people grew up with little motivation to work and to strive for a better life. Now, jobs are scarce, wages are low, and there is no guaranteed life insurance (insurance is a new concept). How a bank works is also a new concept. Many people hoped that independence would immediately bring a better life, but economically this has not yet happened for many people.

The Lithuanian letters, "Lithuania Now," were written by students from the cities of Klaipeda and Silute. They make references to the economic problems in Lithuania.

When referring to an "ethnic" group (as in the activities below), you may wish to use the following definition: *a group of people having similar characteristics, such as religion, language, ancestry, culture, and national origin.*

Activities:
1. Have student pairs compare the two maps of Europe noting as many changes between the maps as they can. Have them look for the following:

   - What new countries appeared? Which countries disappeared?
   - Were there any border changes?
   - Why are these two maps so different? What happened (generally)?

   Students should realize that many of the new borders were established along ethnic lines.

   - What do we mean by an ethnic group?
   - What might be potentially positive or negative about forming new countries along ethnic lines?

2. Have students consider the implications of becoming an independent country as Lithuania did. Divide them into small groups and have them brainstorm answers to the following questions:

   - What would be the advantages of becoming a country?
   - What would be the disadvantages?
   - What are some of the challenges a new country might face?
   - How do you think the Lithuanians might be feeling about their new situation? Why?

   Next distribute Lithuanian letters, "Lithuania Now." Have selected students read the letters aloud. After the letters are read, give students a few minutes to jot down their individual reactions to the letters. As a class, discuss:

   - How would you describe the mood of these letters?
   - How does this compare with your predictions about their feelings (from above)? Would all Lithuanians feel the same? Why or why not?
   - How do these letters address the issue of Lithuania's independence, both positively and negatively? Which concerns seem directly related to independence? Which seem indirectly related?

Extension:

1. Have students research when, why and how other new European countries reached independence, and find out what criteria (i.e., language, ethnic group, physical geography or political compromise) were used to draw the new boundaries.

2. For students who have studied the Civil War in some depth, compare and contrast the recent secession of Soviet Republics from the Soviet Union to the secession of southern states from the United States in the 1860s. In what ways were the two struggles similar and/or dissimilar? What geographic and cultural changes might have occurred if the South had been successful in its intent? Have students work in small groups to come up with their responses either orally or in writing. Then, discuss group responses as a class. Some additional research may be necessary.

3. Research the history of your Volunteer's country or ask your Volunteer directly:

   - Was his or her country part of another country at one time? Why?
   - If it was once part of another country, when, how, and why did it become an independent country?
   - What criteria were used to draw the new borders?

4. Inquire from your Volunteer whether there are distinct ethnic regions within his or her country.

   - What is distinct about these regions?
   - What role, if any, has physical geography played in maintaining these regions?
   - What is the relationship between these regions and the national government?
   - Do any of these regions desire independence? Why or why not?

II. The Golden "Gem" of the Ages

Focus:
The relationship between the resource amber and Lithuania's geology, mythology, history of trade, and arts and crafts.

Resources:
- Reading and worksheet, "Amber," p. 52
- Reading and worksheet, "The Legend of Jurate and Kastytis," p. 53
- Current map of Europe, p. 72

Background:
Amber is one of the few gemstones of organic, rather than mineral, origin. It is a fossilized resin from prehistoric evergreens or other extinct resin-producing trees which flourished in large forests 50 million years ago. Gigantic forests yielding amber resin grew in a region now submerged beneath the Baltic Sea. The forests were centered at approximately latitude 55 degrees north and longitude 20 degrees east. Numerous now-extinct species of pine, cedar, palm, oaks and cypress grew in this "amber forest." As the resin from these trees flowed downward, occasionally entrapping insects and plant pieces, it eventually accumulated in masses of various sizes and shapes.

The fossilization process of amber is different from that which converts wood into petrified wood. Pressure, climatic changes and submersion under salt water, cause oxidation to occur and the molecules in the resin rearrange themselves. This causes a metamorphosis from a tacky resin to a solid. Amber retains most of the same organic substances as the original resin.

Archaeologists have found amber in central Russia, western Norway and Finland. These finds indicate the establishment of trade as early as 3000 BC. Amber ornaments have been found in Egyptian tombs dating to the Sixth Dynasty (3200 BC) and have been identified as Baltic in origin. The Aisti and Baltic tribes in the area of Poland and Lithuania traded not only raw amber but finished articles. Amber was traded in Germany and has also been found in Switzerland, France and in the vicinity of Stonehenge in Great Britain.

Amber has been used as jewelry and as inlay material for hope chests and in pictures representing folktales and the agriculture of Lithuania. The imagination and creativity of the artist determine the extent of its use.

Activities:
1. Have students read and complete the worksheet, "Amber," and then discuss the answers. For further discussion you may want to ask: How is amber like gold in physical properties and in the way cultures have responded to it? How is it different?

2. Have students analyze an explanation of amber from a mythic, rather than scientific point of view. Remind students that both perspectives are ways cultures have made sense of the world around them, myth being the more ancient approach. Distribute the reading, "The Legend of Jurate and Kastytis." Have students read the story and respond to the accompanying questions.

Extension:

1. Have students research and write a scientific explanation for the occurrence of one of the natural resources found in the United States. Then have them write a mythic explanation for this material's occurrence. Encourage them to pay particular attention to the regional details of their story, so that it, like "The Legend of Jurate and Kastytis," is also a cultural reflection of the place in which the material originates.

   This extension activity could also be adapted for students interested in writing a myth about a natural resource in the country of their Peace Corps Volunteer using geographically and culturally appropriate settings, situations, and characters.

2. Ask your Volunteer about valued natural products from his or her country:

   - Are there gems or other important natural products from a specific region that have been widely traded and are now found throughout the country or world?
   - How did this resource arrive in its new locations (i.e., means and methods of trading)?
   - How is this resource used?
   - Are this resource's trade routes different now from those of the past? How? Why?

III. Keeping Culture Alive

Focus:
Identifying and appreciating the variety of ways the Lithuanian people have preserved and perpetuated their cultural identity.

Resources:
- Worksheet, "Keeping Culture Alive," p. 66

Background:
Culture can be defined as the arts, beliefs, customs, traditions, and institutions of a people as well as all the products of human thought and work created by those people at a particular time. Lithuania's periodic occupation and suppression of its cultural heritage has instilled in each generation a determination to preserve the country's culture through its native language, folk songs and dances, and cultural heritage. Even Lithuanians living outside their native country participate in a dual cultural system. Lithuanian-Americans, Lithuanian-Australians and Lithuanian-Brazilians participate in the cultures of their new countries yet maintain the Lithuanian language and culture.

Activities:
1. Introduce students to the concept of culture and cultural identity by beginning close to home. Without telling students what the items have in common, write a list of items associated with your school on the chalkboard (e.g., your mascot, school colors, name of school newspaper, name of sports teams, dress code, in-house terms, etc.) Ask students what all the items have in common. Discuss:

   - For whom do these items have particular meaning? For every U.S. citizen? For every young person? For every person associated with this particular school?
   - What is the purpose of having special items, themes, and symbols for a particular group of people?

   After a short discussion, write the following definition of culture on the board:

   Culture can be defined as the arts, beliefs, customs, traditions, and institutions of a group of people, as well as the products of human work and thought created by those people at a particular time in history.

   Following are some further questions for discussion:

   - In what ways is our school like a mini-culture?
   - Based on the way people behave, dress, talk, etc., are there sub-cultures within this school culture? (If appropriate, solicit examples, but challenge students to do so in a way that promotes description without inviting bias or stereotypes.)
   - What is the difference between sharing a cultural (or group) trait, and being regarded as a stereotype?
   - In what ways can American youth be considered a culture?
   - What are some examples of other cultures or sub-cultures in the United States? (Again, be mindful about stereotypes.)

2. Have students in small groups identify cultural characteristics of the United States by considering the following scenario and responding to the discussion questions:

It is 1995. The United States has been absorbed by a foreign power and the nation ceases to exist as a separate political entity. Americans now live against their will under the rule of this foreign power. They must follow its laws and its beliefs, observe its holidays, speak its language in schools, read its books, learn its history, watch its TV programs, listen to its music on the radio. It looks like this foreign power will be occupying the American territory for a long time to come, maybe for generations.

- As an American, what is your reaction to these events?
- How important would it be to you to keep the feeling of being an American alive?
- What would be some of things you would do to keep alive the feeling of being an American, not only for yourself, but for your children's children?

Discuss responses as a class. Compile a master list of all the different things students would do to preserve and perpetuate aspects of American culture. Can some activities be grouped together (i.e., those related to arts, beliefs and values, language and literature)? Guide students to recognize that there are many avenues by which a people can express their cultural identity, even without political recognition.

Would this assignment have been easier or more difficult 50 years ago? 100 years ago? 200 years ago? Why or why not?

3. Have students complete the worksheet, "Keeping Culture Alive." This worksheet provides details about how Lithuanians and other ethnic groups within the United States have preserved aspects of their cultures.

Answer key for worksheet, "Keeping Culture Alive":

1. d	2. e	3. b	4. a	5. g
6. f	7. i	8. h	9. c	10. j

Extension:

1. Ask your Volunteer about cultural traits of the people of his or her country.

   - What do they do as a people which affirms their unique cultural identity?
   - What attitudes do they have toward traditional aspects of their culture?
   - Does the country have a youth culture? If so, how is it different from adult culture?

2. Ask your Volunteer about his or her experience living as an American in a different culture:

   - How has he/she learned about the host country's culture?
   - What does he or she miss and not miss about American culture?
   - In what ways has he or she had to alter behavior in order to get along well with the people of the country?
   - What aspects of the country's culture does your Volunteer particularly enjoy? Why?

3. Ask if the people of your Volunteer's country, like the Lithuanians, were ever under occupation by another culture. If so:

   - When, why and for how long?
   - What was the relationship between the ruling culture and the local culture?
   - Did people adopt or resist that culture?

IV. Lithuania: Hopes and Dreams

Focus:
How the dreams and aspirations of a people reflect their cultural values.

Resources:
- Lithuanian letters, "Hopes and Dreams," pp. 43-44

Background:
The Lithuanian letters, "Hopes and Dreams" were written by students in grades six through 12 in the cities of Klaipeda and Silute. These students have had instruction in the English language since grade five or six. The negativism which is expressed in many of the letters is a reflection of their as yet unfulfilled dream that freedom would bring economic stability, individual family prosperity and a healthy environment. In contrast to the negativism, strong family values such as respect of elders, close ties to extended family, and an appreciation of the simple things in life keep the hopes of many young people alive.

Activities:
1. Tell students that a people preserve their cultural identity not only by telling stories from the past, but also by dreaming about the future. This helps people unite in times of adversity and gives them hope. For example, Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream. . ." speech inspired Americans in the Civil Rights Movement to keep working for a just and better society.

   Have students read the Lithuanian letters, "Hopes and Dreams" aloud in groups of four or five. Have each group note both the concerns and hopes in the letters. As a class discuss the following:

   - What present concerns seem related to the country's past? Why might the students still be concerned about these issues? What do they have to do with their present situation?
   - What connection(s) do you see between these Lithuanians' present concerns and their hopes for the future?
   - Why are the students wishing for these particular things?
   - From reading these letters, what seems important to Lithuanians today? What do they value?
   - How is an individual dream different from a collective or national dream? Can you find some examples of individual dreams in these letters?
   - Why do you think these Lithuanians, in general, seem to emphasize the collective dream? What might it have to do with their country's history of occupation?

2. Have students write an essay entitled, "Hopes for the United States." Have students read their essays in small groups or ask volunteers to read to the whole class. Discuss these essays by the same process described above. Compare these responses with those from the Lithuanian letters. In what ways do the dissimilarities reflect Lithuania's particular political and cultural situation?

3. Have your students investigate how their hopes and aspirations for the United States compare with those of their parents' generation. Have them interview a parent or adult friend about their concerns and hopes for the future and share their answers with the class. Compare these responses with those from the two activities above.

4. Ask students to prepare a collage which represents the differences and similarities between Lithuanian hopes and dreams and American hopes and dreams. Provide each group of five students with a stack of magazines and two pieces of poster paper. Ask students to compile pictures that symbolize the dreams of these two cultures. Students should draft, edit, revise, and finalize a brief explanation paper describing the meanings of the pictures on each poster.

Extension:
Ask your Volunteer how U.S. and Lithuanian hopes and dreams compare with those of his or her country.

- Are the hopes and dreams different for different groups in the country? In what ways?
- Are the hopes and dreams different for youths and adults? Are they different for people living in urban areas vs. people living in rural areas? In what ways?

Activities: Grades 10-12

I. Centuries of Change

Focus:
Political causes and cultural consequences of Lithuania's shifting borders.

Resources:
- Reading, "Lithuanian Timeline," pp. 55-56
- Worksheet, "Centuries of Change," p. 57
- Current map of Europe, p. 72
- Map of pre-1991 Europe, (not provided)

Background:
Lithuania's history is one of turbulence. Since the 1100s when Lithuania's people united under its first great ruler, Mindaugas, and until its present independence, Lithuania has survived numerous occupations and border changes. (See "Information for Teachers" for detailed historical information.) Lithuania was a major power during the Middle Ages but was partitioned between Russia and Prussia in the 18th century.

In 1918, Lithuania became an independent country, but after Soviet troops occupied it in 1940, it was proclaimed the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic. On March 11, 1990, the Lithuanian parliament issued a declaration of independence and voted to have Lithuania secede from the Soviet Union. Independence was recognized in September 1991 after the failed coup against the Soviet regime in Moscow. Centuries of political struggle have united the Lithuanian people in resisting interference with their language, songs, religion and values. Changes to the language have been most strongly resisted. Lithuania has, however, assimilated some aspects of the cultures which have occupied its borders.

Activities:
1. Review the reading, "Lithuanian Timeline." Draw students' attention to the way political changes often resulted in cultural changes. Have students complete the worksheet, "Centuries of Change," and discuss the responses as a class. Following are questions for further discussion:

   - What is it about the geography around the Baltic region that has made Lithuania both so attractive to annex and so apparently vulnerable to defend?
   - Why do you think historically there has been a continued struggle over this territory? What is the struggle for?
   - What might be some of the long-term consequences of this political turmoil on immigration, Lithuania's cultural values, and its relations with neighboring countries?
   - Why do you think the general Lithuanian response was one of cultural resistance rather than cultural assimilation?

2. Have students research the history of one of Lithuania's occupations (or liberations) in more detail. Have them especially note the reasons for the occupation, effect of the occupation on Lithuania's borders, and subsequent changes in culture and politics. Students may want to draw maps depicting Lithuanian territory before and after the particular annexation they research.

Extension:

1. Have students research the history of border changes of other Northern European countries, or of the United States (or a particular state). Have them consider the following:

   - How has the size of this territory under research changed over the years?
   - What considerations (i.e., physical geography, politics, culture) led to the placement of the original boundaries?
   - What have been the causes of border changes since then?
   - What were the cultural consequences of those changes?

   Have students draw maps showing the border changes.

2. Ask your Volunteer about the history of border changes in his or her country.

   - How, when, and why were the original borders set where they were?
   - What have been the cultural consequences of these border changes?

II. The Language of a Culture

Focus:
The role of language as a means of cultural preservation and political expression.

Resources:
- Reading, "The Lithuanian Language," pp. 58-59
- Reading, "Egle, Queen of the Grass Snakes," pp. 50-51
- Reading and worksheet, "The Legend of Jurate and Kastytis," p. 53
- Worksheet, "Riddles, Riddles Everywhere," p. 54

Background:
The Lithuanian language belongs to the Indo-European group of languages and has retained a great many of its ancient features. The Lithuanian noun has two genders and seven declensional cases and the verb has four tenses. The earliest "cousins" of the Lithuanian language can be traced to the Finno-Ugric language in which words of Lithuanian origin make up one percent of the total vocabulary. Many Lithuanian words are used by Belarusians and Poles in areas formerly inhabited by Lithuanians. A dictionary of the Lithuanian language, which is nearing publication, will consist of 20 volumes and will contain about 400,000 entries.

Language and its expression through stories, songs, legends and riddles have always been important to the Lithuania people. The more than 80,000 folktales registered in Lithuania have perpetuated the language alive, stimulated thinking, fused the people into a nation and helped keep that nation alive.

Activities:
1. Have students read the worksheet, "The Lithuanian Language." Discuss the following questions with the whole class or have small groups work on them and then report their ideas to everyone:

   - Why do you think the Poles and the Soviets were so intent on suppressing the Lithuanian language and imposing their own?
   - Why were Lithuanians so intent on resisting that some risked jail by writing in Lithuanian? What does this suggest to you about the relationship between language and cultural identity?
   - Why do you think Lithuanians were intent on keeping their language alive once they emigrated? (Not all immigrant groups choose to do this.)
   - What challenges would Lithuanian speakers face in their attempts to pass on their language to succeeding generations of American-born descendants?
   - Do you think the history of Lithuanians in America will ultimately be one of cultural resistance or cultural assimilation. Why?

2. Remind students how a people's language and literature is often a key part of their cultural identity. Discuss possible reasons for this.

   - Ask for examples from the United States.
   - Inform students about Lithuania's particularly rich heritage of folktales.
   - Ask students to discuss: What are folktales?

3. Distribute the two folktales ("The Legend of Jurate and Kastytis" and "Egle, Queen of the Grass Snakes"). Tell students that even though both tales take place in mythic times, both reflect aspects of Lithuania's culture and geography that are still true today. Read the tales aloud as a class, then discuss each tale in turn:

   - What specific aspects of this tale would remind present-day Lithuanians about what is unique to their culture and geography?
   - These are both old myths. Why might they still be important to the Lithuanian people? Why keep re-telling old stories?

4. Introduce students to some Lithuanian riddles. How would sharing riddles help a people feel distinct from other cultures?

Extension:

1. Have students consider the issue of language in the United States. (In discussing the issue of language, be sensitive to the varying needs and perspectives of your students.) The United States has no official national language. In response to the increasing diversity of cultures that comprise the United States, a citizens' movement is underway to legislate English as the official language. Discuss the following with your class:

   - What might be the effect of such legislation on various aspects of public life (i.e., on education, business, government)?
   - What would be the advantages and disadvantages of adopting one national language?
   - Do you personally agree or disagree with this proposal?

   Challenge students to express their opinions through a debate or argumentative essay. Have students anticipate the arguments of the other side, taking the opposite stance in their essay or debate.

2. Have small groups of students consider one of the following issues and then share their responses with the class, either orally or in writing. Students may need to be familiar with the concepts discussed in the unit entitled, "Keeping Culture Alive" from the activities section for grades 6-9.

   - Many Lithuanian-Americans have successfully preserved aspects of their home culture while becoming residents of the United States, but not all ethnic groups have wanted to or been able to do so. Ancestors of today's African-Americans, for example, confronted circumstances that made it very difficult, if not impossible, to preserve and perpetuate traditions of the African cultures from which they came. Applying what you have learned about the mechanics of cultural preservation, brainstorm reasons why. Be specific.

   - Native Americans and Lithuanians both are peoples who have lived for centuries on land dominated by "foreign" culture. Recognizing the many ways the specific traditions of these two peoples are very different, in what way(s) could we say their experiences have been similar? In what ways have their cultural responses to the circumstances been similar and dissimilar?

   - Have students assume the voice of an early African-American who gives an account of why preserving his or her culture was so difficult in the United States.

- Create an imaginary conversation between a Native American and a Lithuanian in which they share their experiences and feelings about being ruled by a foreign culture.

3. Ask your Volunteer about the role of language in his or her country's culture.

   - What language is spoken in your Volunteer's country? If more than one, which one predominates? Why?
   - Is this language unique to this country?
   - If not, what other regions speak this language too? Are other aspects of culture also shared among regions?
   - What language(s) do students in your Volunteer's country use in school? Why?
   - What has been your Volunteer's biggest challenge in learning the language of his or her host country? What has been the biggest reward?
   - What strategies has your Volunteer used to learn the language of his or her host country? What can U.S. students learn from him or her?

4. Have students write a version of "Egle" or "Jurate" as if it took place in their own region of the United States, or in their Volunteer's country. Have them think about what language, setting, characters and situation would be appropriate for the culture in which their folktale takes place. Students may want to illustrate these stories and/or share them with the Volunteer or younger students.

5. Ask your Volunteer to send some riddles, or proverbs, of the culture in which he/she is living.

   - Request that answers (at least hints) and explanations be included.

   Answer key for worksheet, "Riddles, Riddles, Everywhere":

1.	b	2.	a	3.	d	4.	e	5.	c
6.	i	7.	h	8.	g	9.	j	10.	f

III. Spanning Cultures, Building Bridges: A Transatlantic Flight

Focus:
How movement of peoples contributes to cultural change.

Resources:
- Reading, "The Tragedy of Darius and Girenas," pp. 60-61
- Reading, "Basketball's High-Flyer," p. 62
- Worksheet, "The Tragedy: Questions for Thought," p. 63
- Reading, "The Flight Testament of Darius and Girenas," p. 64
- Worksheet, "Interpreting the Testament," p. 65

Background:
Lithuanians have moved from and to their country for many reasons.

In the early 1900s, Czarist rule was at its height and the poor farmer sought the dreamland of the United States. The well-to-do farmer whose lands would be subdivided among his heirs knew that the eldest son would pay all debts for the land while the younger sons would receive only 200 rubles. These offspring preferred to travel to the United States to seek their fortunes. They paid guides to take them through Prussia, then to Bremen, and finally to Hamburg in order to board ships to New York.

By 1920, the numbers of people leaving Lithuania for the United States was so great the United States government set a strict quota that allowed only 344 Lithuanians to be admitted per year (not including those born in the United States). After the restoration of independence, many Lithuanians returned to Lithuania. In 1922 alone, 5000 visas to Lithuania were issued. It was during this time period that the Lithuanian-American pilots, Darius and Girenas, set out on their transatlantic flight. They wrote an inspiring testament which is included in this study guide.

Activities:
1. Have students read "The Tragedy of Darius and Girenas" and "Basketball's High-Flyer." Each is a story about the transatlantic flight of Darius and Girenas, the former from a Lithuanian perspective and the latter from a U.S. perspective. Then, in small groups have them respond to the questions about the stories on the worksheet, "The Tragedy: Questions for Thought." Discuss the responses as a class.

   Following are possible further discussion or writing assignment topics. Please note that some additional research may be needed:

   - It is possible to be a full participant in two different cultures: Do you agree or disagree? Why?
   - The Darius-Girenas journey would have been less significant for Lithuanians had they successfully completed the mission. Do you agree or disagree? Why?
   - Even though unsuccessful, the transatlantic flight of Darius and Girenas was more important to Lithuanians than was Lindbergh's successful flight to Americans. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

2. Distribute "The Flight Testament of Darius and Girenas" and the worksheet, "Interpreting the Testament." Present the testament as an example of a cultural document which is meant to bolster the cultural identity of a group, in this case,

Lithuanians. Have students respond to the questions on the worksheet either individually or in small groups and discuss their responses as a class.

3. Have students compare and contrast the two stories of the flight.

   - What is similar and/or dissimilar about the information given and how it is conveyed?
   - How do the two pieces differ in intended audience, purpose, use of language, etc.?
   - What connection do you see between the nationality of the writer and how an event is reported?

Extension:

1. Challenge students to identify occasions in U.S. history of exploration that were as important for American cultural identity as the Darius-Girenas flight was for Lithuanian identity. Have their research focus on why the event was perceived to be significant and its outcome. Students should also note the impact of the exploration on U.S. culture. Possible events:

   - Glenn's orbit in space
   - Armstrong's moon landing
   - Lindbergh's transatlantic flight
   - The Lewis and Clark expedition
   - North/South Pole explorations

2. Ask your Volunteer about particular people held in high esteem in his or her country.

   - Why are these people considered heroes ?
   - What important cultural values do these heroes represent?

3. Have your students consider the ways in which your Volunteer is involved in cross-cultural contributions.

   - What has he or she shared with the people of his country that is related to American culture?
   - What has he or she learned from his or her country's culture?

   Have your students write their Volunteer with their observations and ask for his or her opinion as well.

IV. Out of Balance: Environmental Problems in Lithuania

Focus:
Ecological consequences of human interaction with the environment.

Resources:
- Lithuanian letters, "Environmental Problems," p. 46
- Reading, "Human Interaction with the Environment," pp. 67-68
- Chart, "Out of Balance," p. 69
- Worksheet, "Out of Balance: "Think About It," p. 70
- Map of Lithuania, p. 71

Background:
During the Soviet occupation of Lithuania, the Soviets located many polluting industries, such as chemical, cement, and pesticide plants, in Lithuania. Industrial production was run at 100 percent capacity, but only 15 percent of the products were used in Lithuania. The rest of the products were exported to other Soviet republics.

No regulatory agencies were set up and no funds were appropriated to control industrial pollution. Defoliation occurred, human health was affected, and 70 percent of Lithuania's waterways became polluted. Municipal waste water and other solid and toxic waste was dumped into the country's rivers, which then flowed into the Baltic Sea.

After the declaration of independence, Lithuania began work on cleaning up its polluted environment. In the spring of 1994, with the help of the Swedish government, the World Ba and the United States Environmental Protection Agency, work was begun to build waste water treatment plants. However, it will take years for the waterways to be cleaned up.

During May, 1994, The World Environment Center, located in New York, sponsored an environmental conference in Vilnius. This conference was attended by directors of chemical, cement, and plastic industries. Work has begun to educate people about the environment and to provide resources for controlling pollution.

On June 15, 1994, the Environmental Protection Ministry of Lithuania gained a cabinet position under the leadership of Bronius Bradauskas.

(Special thanks to Vladas Adamkus, Director Midwest Environmental Protection Agency, Chicago, Illinois, for providing this information.)

Activities:
1. Introduce this topic deductively. Inform students that you have some letters written by Lithuanian students in response to an essay assignment related to the challenges Lithuania faces today.

   Distribute the letters, "Environmental Problems." Let the voices from Lithuania "speak" by selecting different students to read aloud. Remind students that these letters are not translated, but written in English by students whose first language is Lithuanian. Ask the students to listen for recurrent concerns in the letters. Ultimately, focus attention on ecology by asking:

   - What do these Lithuanians seem to mean by "ecology?"
   - What do you think are some of the environmental problems facing Lithuania today?

- Do you think Lithuanians and people in the U.S. have the same concerns about the environment? Why or why not?

2. Have students analyze ecological consequences of human culture by reading "Human Interaction and the Environment," and then in small groups have them complete the chart, "Out of Balance." As an exercise in point of view, have students describe the point of view and tone of the essay. Have them identify words or phrases which led them to their decision. Ask: Is the piece balanced? Why or why not?

3. Have students consider further the connection between the environment and the social, political and economic expressions of human culture. In their small groups, have them discuss and come to agreement about the questions on the worksheet, "Think About It." Let them refer to the map of Lithuania if necessary. Responses may vary, so stress the reasoning behind the responses. Following are questions for further discussion:

   - Which situations on the chart are related to political decisions?
   - In what ways has Lithuania's current economic struggle aggravated specific environmental problems?
   - The reading, "Human Interaction and the Environment," makes much of current energy inefficiency in Lithuania. What is the connection between producing and using energy and environmental problems?
   - How would you verify the accuracy of the information in this essay?

Extension:

1. Have students research environmental issues facing other former Eastern Bloc countries.

   - How similar or dissimilar are the issues to Lithuania's problems? Why?
   - What steps, if any, are being taken to address these other situations?

2. Have students write about what they believe are the three most pressing environmental problems in the United States (or their region). Have individuals share their written ideas in small groups. Compile a list of the problems cited and complete charts similar to the chart, "Out of Balance." Apply the questions on the worksheet, "Out of Balance: Think About It" to the United States' situation. As a class, compare and contrast these U.S. problems with the Lithuanian problems. What can we learn from each other?

3. Have students research specific man-made environmental problems in the United States. Have students identify causes and consequences of the problems and identify what steps, if any, have been taken to address them. Possible topics:

   - The Love Canal
   - Lake Erie
   - Wetlands
   - The Dust Bowl
   - Three Mile Island
   - Urban air quality / acid rain
   - The Valdez oil spill in Prince William Sound
   - Ground water contamination

4. Ask your Volunteer about environmental problems in his or her country which are related to the presence of human culture. Inquire whether the environmental problems in his or her country are local, regional, or trans-national. Ask about specific and general causes and consequences. Ask how the people of the country or region perceive these problems and what is being done to solve them.

Part III: Resources

A. Letters From Lithuania
B. Student Worksheets
C. Maps
D. Bibliography

What U.S. Students Should Know About Lithuania

The following letters were written in English by students of Peace Corps Volunteers teaching in Lithuania. As English is not their native language, we have corrected the spelling for clarity. The original wording, punctuation, and grammar remain.

Letter A

The students in the U.S. should know something about the nature of Lithuania. Lithuania is a small Baltic state by the Baltic Sea. Lithuania has an area of 62,500 sq. km. It is a country of plains and hills. There are not any volcanoes or earthquakes in Lithuania. It is a quiet place of nature. There are over a thousand rivers and four thousand lakes in Lithuania. There are a lot of rivers in Lithuania: the Nevezis, the Neris, the Dubysa and many more. The Nemunas is the longest river in Lithuania. The Tauragnas is the deepest lake in our country.

The stork is recognized as the national bird. Our parents used to tell us (when we were small kids) that storks brought us to our mamas and papas. However, we know it's not true! There are four seasons in Lithuania: spring, summer, autumn and winter. We don't have hot summers. The temperature is around 12-30 degrees centigrade (54-86 degrees F.) above zero. So oranges and bananas cannot ripen in such climatic conditions. It is a favorable climate for wolves, hares, foxes and elks. The most common trees are oaks, birches, asps, ashes in Lithuania. There are a lot of pines near the Baltic Sea. Some time ago you could find a lot of small pieces of amber near the Baltic sea-shore as you can't find them now. Amber is like gold in Lithuania.

We have a long winter of 3 months in Lithuania. There are not any big mountains in Lithuania. So we cannot enjoy mountain skiing in winter. I love my country and its nature. I wish all the best for Lithuania and its future!

(unsigned)

Letter B

Lithuania is a nice, but small country. Many cities are in Lithuania. Many schools are in Lithuania too. The biggest universities are in Kaunas and in Vilnius. There learn people from all over the country.

Vilnius is the capital of Lithuania. Vilnius is a big town. About 3.5 million people live in Lithuania. A large town is Kaunas. Kaunas was the

capital of Lithuania. There are many museums, a zoo, and a zoo museum, biology garden. The large towns are Klaipeda, Siauliai, Panevezys. An interesting university is in the large town too. A lot of great poets, writers and artists live in our country. Our country has a lot of theatres, cinemas, opera houses. A lot of holiday homes are in Neringa, Palanga, Nida. Many people go to the library and dance. Our country has a lot of interesting festivals too.

Nature is beautiful in Lithuania. Many students like to go to the Baltic Sea and the river Nemunas. A lot of hills are in our country. Many students learn our Lithuanian history, foreign languages, geography.

(unsigned)

Letter C

Lithuania lies on the east coast of the Baltic Sea. One of the greatest charms of our republic is the Baltic sea. Lithuania is a country of lakes and rivers. There are over three thousand large and small lakes in this republic. Lithuania is often called the land of the Nemunas. The Nemunas is the longest and most beautiful river of Lithuania. The climate of Lithuania is somewhat between maritime and continental. There are many forests in Lithuania.

Vilnius is the capital of Lithuania. Vilnius is famous for its architectural and historic monuments. It is also famous for its university which is over 400 years old. Kaunas is the second largest city of Lithuania, and Klaipeda is Lithuania's only port. There are many health resorts in Lithuania. The most popular seaside resort of Lithuania is Palanga, famous for its sandy beach and the wonderfully blue sea. Kursiu Nerija, a narrow 98 kilometer long spit between the Baltic sea and the Kursiu Lagoon is unique in its beauty.

There are 80 scientific institutions. We have 10 theatres, the Philharmonic Society, a national film industry, a lot of music companies. There are nearly 40 museums in Lithuania. Nowadays the world knows the name of Lithuania. Because Lithuania fought for its independence and freedom.

(unsigned)

Lithuania Now

The following letters were written in English by secondary school students of Peace Corps Volunteers teaching in Lithuania. As English is not their native language, we have corrected the spelling for clarity. The original wording, punctuation, and grammar remain.

Letter A
The Republic of Lithuania is a sovereign, democratic state. The Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania, the Government and the Judiciary of Lithuania express the will and interests of the people of Lithuania. The territory of the Republic of Lithuania is integral and indivisible; its borders may be changed only on the basis of international agreement. The Lithuanian language is the state language of the Republic of Lithuania. The state emblem of the Republic of Lithuania is the white Vytis knight on a red background. The state flag is the national flag which consists of three horizontal strips. The top strip is yellow, the middle green, the bottom red. The national anthem is the national song by Vincas Kudirka. Lithuania proclaimed itself independent on the 11th of March, 1990.

Jurga, Ruta, Gediminas, Ernestas, and Vaidas, Druskininkai School #4, 11b class

Letter B
Lithuania is an independent country. Near the Baltic Sea. The fight for freedom was long and heavy. People wanted to have a free country, but they did not know how much does this freedom cost. We have a free country at the cost of a heavy sacrifice. But the people who live in Lithuania are not happy. Many problems are in Lithuania now. Large prices and small wages are one of the largest problems. Pensioners who worked many years now have very small pensions. People can just pay for flats and for food. Some people have enough money but they are not honest. Another large problem is disagreement between the power and the people. Some people dislike power, other people fight for power. Disagreements are going between the different politics. The greatest problem is crime. There is a very difficult criminal situation in Lithuania. I want Lithuania to have a high economy and culture.

Vilma Baseika, 11a class

Letter C
Lithuania is my native land. I want life in Lithuania to be nice and good. Now life of most people in Lithuania is difficult. But Lithuania has independence and people are free. I hope that Lithuania will be rich and nice country like U.S.A. or Japan. Now many people don't want to live in our country. I hope that all Lithuanians will want to live only in Lithuania in future. I don't like government in Lithuania now. They are wrong. I think some day government will be honest, good and beautiful. Maybe I will not see that, but my children will see that. Life in Lithuania is dull. Maybe not for all people, but for most of them. Everything same and dull. I want adventures like many people. But adventures cost a lot of money. It is one of the problems of Lithuania. Here very big crime's a problem. In Lithuania are many bad people who do wrong. Of course, a lot of very beautiful things are in Lithuania, too. But I can't be happy.....

Ausra Pusvaskyte 12a

Hopes and Dreams

The following letters were written in English by secondary school students of Peace Corps Volunteers teaching in Lithuania. As English is not their native language, we have corrected the spelling for clarity. The original wording, punctuation, and grammar remain.

Letter A

I live in Lithuania. Lithuania is a little, but nice country. I love it, because I was born here and Lithuania is my native country. Lithuanians love it too and everybody takes care of our country. It is difficult time in Lithuania now because economy is weak and living standard is weak too. People are friendly and live in harmony. But a lot of Lithuanians live very bad. Many of us live in a small way and they live on pension. It is very difficult because people haven't money for food or clothes. Many Lithuanians live in poverty and they have nothing to live on. I hope that economy, living and culture standard will be higher at last and I want that people in Lithuania would live better and would be happy. A lot of people are unemployed in Lithuania now and many Lithuanians can not maintain their families. It is terrible. I hope that in the future all people will have work.

(unsigned)

Letter B

Lithuania is an independent country. I hope it will be independent forever. Living in Lithuania is very hard. The economy of Lithuania is very bad, too. I hope that in future it will improve. I like my motorcycle very much. I hope there will be any competitions of motorcycles in Lithuania in the next year. Basketball is a very popular game in Lithuania. Many people are proud of "Zalgiris". This team is the best team, not only in Lithuania, but in other countries, too. I hope that in future it will be in the first place in the world. I hope "Zalgiris" will become conqueror. I think that my hopes will be fulfilled.

(unsigned)

Letter C

Lithuania is a very small but beautiful country. Lithuania is my native country. I like and I will like it very much. Growing up in Lithuania is not bad, but it is not good. Lithuanians have many problems. The biggest problem in the country is economy. I want to help people. I want to study economics. We have many unemployed people and it is very bad. Many people don't have money to buy only some bread. Many people don't have place in where they can live too. I hope life in Lithuania will be better. I think all Lithuanians agree with me.

Lithuanian people have helped our government and each other too. We have been very friendly and understand each other. I hope, when I have my own family there will be a good economy, very big and good industry too. We will have many factories and good machinery. We will have much coal, fuel, oil and electric energy, too. We will have good agriculture.

We will have many bread and all Lithuanians will not be hungry. I think my children will go at the good school, maybe, like in the United States of America. My own family will have a good house, a car. We and all Lithuanians will be happy. We will not look like the hungry and angry wolfs as like now.

(Laura Ivaskeviciute, 11a)

Letter D

There are a lot of problems in Lithuania now. The biggest problem in the country is the unemployment. People must work because they have to maintain their families. High cost of living is in Lithuania. Even loaf of bread is very expensive. My family lives very hard, too. My father lives for a lack of work. My mother works, but mother's salary is little. My sister assisted my family. My sister's wedding occurred in October. She can't help us. My sister has his family. I want, my family to live better.

A lot of factories are disabled in our country. I want factories to begin to work. I hope all the factories will begin to work next year. When I have a family, all the people won't know, what the word "unemployment" means.

A lot of crimes happen in Lithuania every day. Bad and wicked people steal from fair and honest people. They rob even factories and property of power. There are a lot of robberies, beatings, scuffles and violence in Lithuania every day. I fear, when I go for a walk in the evening because bad people live in Ukmerge, too. I hope people won't understand what the word "crime" means, too. I hope all the bad and wicked people will change to good and honest people. I hope I won't be afraid of bad people. I am afraid of alcoholics now, too. They are insulting to other people. There are a lot of alcoholics in Lithuania. They drink spirits because they haven't any money. Alcoholics want to forget the painful affairs. Whiskey was cheap ten years ago. They got accustomed to drinking spirits and they consume strong drinks every day. I hope I won't be afraid of alcoholics. All the alcoholics will work in the factories. If the alcoholics had work, they would not have time to drink spirits.

Techniques of production are backward in Lithuania. There is not effective equipment in the country. The weather is dirty. The water is dirty, too. I hope there will be effective equipment in Lithuania. I hope Lithuania will become the best of all countries in Europe!

(unsigned)

Environmental Problems

The following letters were written in English by secondary school students of Peace Corps Volunteers teaching in Lithuania. As English is not their native language, we have corrected the spelling for clarity. The original wording, punctuation, and grammar remain.

Letter A

Lithuania is one of the smaller countries of the world. We think that the hopes and dreams of the people will be fulfilled. There are problems, which are like the problems in all countries and will be solved with time. There is a great problem of economics in Lithuania. In Lithuania there is a bad living standard, agriculture is very ruined. And only people can correct this. We need soley that people would want to change because we think that power can't change it. The second great problem is the war for power, which reins the life of Lithuanians. Above all, that some people want to take power and power conflicts harm the common people of Lithuania. The third problem is ecology. There is not clean nature in our country. The Baltic Sea is very dirty. After the catastrophe at Chernobyl, dangerous materials poisoned all plants. We think that these problems are in almost all countries of the world, not only Lithuania.

(Edita Likerauskaite, Danguole Sicukonyte, Ausra Bocisaite, Kristina Beneviciute)

Letter B

Lithuania is a very nice country. She is not big, but I like it. I like Lithuanian people. They are very good. But sometimes I meet bad people, I want all people to be good. I want all the people to be happy and friendly. Lithuanian nature is very beautiful. I want people to love and not soil it.

(Kristina Buskaite)

Letter C

I hope that in Lithuania there will be fewer bad people and that Lithuania will always be independent from Russia. One of the biggest problems is work. In Lithuania there is not a lot of work. Money is a second problem. The third problem is smoke.

(unsigned)

Letter D

I want to wish the best of everything in Lithuania's life. I would like that Lithuania's people become better and more industrious. I know Lithuanians are not bad, but they want to have more and more money and they do not think about their children and Lithuania's future. They don't think what will be tomorrow. They are happy to have some food today. It is not very good. I would like the people to think about nature. Why, Lithuania's nature is very wonderful and I wish for our country to keep our nature for all times nice and as a unique beauty. Anyway, everything in Lithuania belongs to our people and to our government. I hope that our political men will not forget their promises to do the best for Lithuania.

(unsigned)

True or False: Lithuania and the United States

Use the world map to decide which of the following statements are true. Write true or false beside each statement. Correct the false statements so they are true.

_____ 1. Both Lithuania and the United States are north of the equator.

_____ 2. Both Lithuania and the United States are in Europe.

_____ 3 Both Lithuania and the United States border water.

_____ 4. Both Lithuania and the United States are bordered by four countries.

_____ 5. Both Lithuania and the United States are independent countries.

_____ 6. Both Lithuania and the United States are in the southern hemisphere.

_____ 7. Both Lithuania and the United States are located between O degrees and 30 degrees east longitude.

_____ 8. Both Lithuania and the United States are more than 2,000 miles across.

_____ 9. Both Lithuania and the United States have territory at 60 degree north latitude.

_____ 10. Both Lithuania and the United States are north of the Tropic of Cancer.

Where Is It?

Use the map of Europe to help you these exercises.

I. Match Lithuania's neighboring countries with their location.

_____1.	Latvia	a. East and West of Lithuania
_____2.	Poland	b. North of Lithuania
_____3.	Belarus	c. Southwest of Lithuania
_____4.	Russia	d. East of Lithuania

II. Fill in the blank with the correct cardinal direction:
N (north), S (south), E (east), W (west).

1. Lithuania is _____ of Finland.
2. Lithuania is _____ of the giant country of Russia.
3. Lithuania is _____ of the Scandinavian nations of Norway and Sweden,where Vikings once lived.
4. Lithuania is _____ of the new nation of Moldovia.
5. Lithuania is _____ of Germany, which used to be two nations.
6. Lithuania is _____ of Greece, where the Olympics first began.
7. Lithuania is _____ of Great Britain, whose citizens speak English.

III. Now make up and answer three of your own.

1. Lithuania is _____ of _____.
(direction) (country)
2. Lithuania is _____ of _____.
(direction) (country)
3. Lithuania is _____ of _____.
(direction) (country)

What's the Weather?

People can use both primary sources (like the letter that follows) and secondary sources (like the table below) to draw conclusions about a place. Use the sources below to gather as much information as possible about the weather of Lithuania.

Letter from a Lithuanian student:

There are four seasons in Lithuania: spring, summer, autumn and winter. We don't have hot summers. The temperature is about 12-30 degrees Centigrade or 53-86 degrees Fahrenheit. So oranges and bananas cannot ripen in such climatic conditions. It is a favorite climate for wolves, hares, foxes, and elks. The most common trees are the oaks, birches, lindens, asps, and ashes in Lithuania. There are a lot of pines near the Baltic Sea. Some time ago you could find a lot of small pieces of amber near the Baltic seashore but you cannot find them now. Amber is like gold in Lithuania.

We have a long winter for three months in Lithuania. The temperature is usually about -2 degrees Centigrade or 28 degrees Fahrenheit during the winter months. There are not any big mountains in Lithuania. So we cannot enjoy mountain skiing in the winter. I love my country and its nature.

(unsigned)

Precipitation	Temperature
Rainfall and snow annually range from 21 inches to 34 inches. December, January, and February are the snowiest months.	January is the coldest month. Temperatures average about 27 degrees Fahrenheit on the seacoast to 21 degrees Fahrenheit inland. July is the hottest month. Temperatures average about 61 degrees Fahrenheit near the sea and 64 degrees Fahrenheit inland. Temperatures can reach into the high 80s with high humidity.

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Lithuania: Sights to See

Druskinikai
The resort town of Druskinikai is located on the Nemunas River in the middle of dense forests. It is one of the most beautiful parts of the country. The road into town is called Ciurlionis Way. It is named for Lithuania's most renowned artist and composer. The road is lined with his sculptures.

Kaunas
Kaunas is Lithuania's second-largest city. It is a university town and a center for industry. It is at the junction of the Nemunas and Neris rivers. It has an Old Town and New Town. Kaunas Castle, an 11th century castle, has a history museum. Outside of town is Pazaislis Monastery and church, a baroque church with beautiful decorations and frescoes. Also outside of town is The Ninth Fort, a World War II Nazi concentration camp.

Klaipeda
This port city is a fishing and manufacturing center. It is Lithuania's oldest city. The Sea Museum and Aquarium has a colony of Arctic penguins. The Ethnographic Museum has a collection of amber and coins.

Palanga
This is the prettiest and best-developed seaside resort with powdery beaches and dunes. Palanga has a lovely botanical park, and a large amber museum (in the Palace of Tiskevicius), as well as a statue of the mythological characters, Jurate and Kastytis.

Rumsiskes
This is a living folk life museum. Buildings from all over Lithuania have been reconstructed here to show how Lithuanians lived long ago. A folk song and dance presentation occurs each day.

Trakai
This town was the medieval capital of Lithuania. The restored Traku Castle on the peninsula is a wonderful example of where knights lived.

Vilnius
Vilnius was founded in the 10th century and is the capital of Lithuania. There are many beautiful buildings in Vilnius. The church of Saints Peter and Paul is a 14th century building. The church of St. Casimir (patron saint of Lithuania) is a domed church and was turned into a museum while the Soviets were in power. The University of Vilnius is in the Old Town and Gediminas' Tower is found on Castle Hill.

Siauliai
This is a 750-year-old city, most of which was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1872. However, there are still nice sections of the old city which escaped destruction. Most people visit Siauliai to make a pilgrimage to the Hill of Crosses. For nearly 700 years, visitors have climbed the hill to leave a cross and say a prayer. Although the Soviets tore out the crosses many times, Lithuanians always returned and replaced them.

Egle, Queen of the Grass Snakes

Very long ago by the Lithuanian seacoast lived a farmer and his wife. Their cottage was one of the prettiest. The roof was covered with straw, and the rooftop was decorated with carvings. The windowsills were decorated with carved tulips. In the cottage yard bloomed colorful flowers.

The farmer had twelve sons and three daughters. The youngest and prettiest daughter was Egle. One evening the sisters went to the sea to bathe, leaving their clothes on the shore. A grass snake crawled into Egle's shirt sleeve. Egle was frightened. The grass snake began to speak: "Give me your word that you will marry me, then I will crawl out." Egle did not want to agree, but how could she get rid of the grass snake? Finally, Egle agreed to marry the grass snake.

The grass snake crawled out of the shirt sleeve. All of the sisters quickly hurried home and forgot what was promised to the grass snake. After three days, a whole group of grass snakes slithered into Egle's yard. They reminded Egle that she had promised to marry the grass snake. They demanded that Egle go away with them. Egle's parents did not want to give Egle to the grass snakes. They tried in many ways to fool the grass snakes but were unsuccessful. As it was promised, thus it must be. Finally, Egle had to go with the grass snakes to the sea.

Just as Egle approached the sea, the sea became stormy. From the depths appeared not a terrible grass snake but a handsome young man -- the Prince of the Waters! He said to Egle: "Do you not recognize me? I appeared to you as a grass snake." She then agreed to be his wife.

The Prince of the Waters led Egle to the grass snake's palace in the ocean depths. Egle was astonished. Such luxury she had never seen before: amber walls, furniture decorated with various jewels and gold dishes. The grass snakes prepared a lavish wedding feast which lasted for three weeks. Egle was very happy.

Nine years passed. Egle had three sons and one daughter. The sons she called Azuolas (Oak), Uosis (Ash) and Berzas (Birch). The daughter she called Drebule (Trembling Poplar). The oldest son, Azuolas, asked Egle: "Mommy, where do our grandparents live? Why don't we ever visit them?" Egle remembered her parents, brothers and sisters and realized she missed them very much. So, she asked her husband, the Prince of the Waters, if she could return to visit her home. Her husband was not able to leave the sea and was afraid to let them go alone. "Perhaps I will not be alive when you return," he said, but Egle begged. Finally he agreed to let them go.

Before leaving, Egle prepared for the journey. She sewed the finest clothes for herself and packed the loveliest treasures. Her relatives would see that she was wealthy and happy. The Prince of the Waters followed his family to the seashore. In bidding farewell, he said to Egle: "When you return, come alone with the children. When you come to the sea, call for me by singing: 'Zilvini, Zilvineli, if you are alive send a milky foam. If you are not alive send a bloody foam.' Then you will know if I am still alive." And to the children, he said, "Do not tell anyone how to summon me!"

Egle promised to return quickly. Egle and the children returned to Egle's home. Everyone rejoiced. Her parents could not get over their enchantment with Egle and her children, nor could they get over their delight with the homecoming presents. All of her relatives

and neighbors gathered to greet Egle and her children. Her parents prepared a feast and entertained the gathered guests. No one could believe the stories Egle told about her life in the depths of the sea.

Egle spent her time happily at home, but she felt it was time to return. Her parents became very sad when they realized that Egle would leave them. They again would be left to live without the beautiful Egle and their now beloved grandchildren. How could they be kept at home?

Egle's brothers and sisters agreed to somehow find out from the children how to summon the grass snake and put an end to him so that Egle and the children could remain at home forever. The next night, Egle's brothers took Azuolas into the woods to herd horses. They asked and asked Azuolas how to summon his father, but Azuolas would not tell. The following night, the brothers took Uosis and Berzas, but they would not tell how to summon their father. The third night the brothers took young Drebule into the woods. Drebule, not understanding that she did wrong, innocently blurted out how to summon her father.

The next morning, when no one was watching, the brothers went to the seashore and sang: "Zilvini, Zilvineli, if you are alive send a milky foam. If you are not alive, send a bloody foam." A milky foam came forth. Out from the foam there appeared the grass snake. All the brothers attacked the grass snake with scythes and killed him. When Egle's brothers returned home, they did not tell Egle what had happened.

No one was able to convince Egle to remain at home. Even though it was lovely with her parents, she felt that her home was in the sea with the Prince of Waters. She said farewell to her parents and all her relatives and then went to the sea alone with her children.

When she came to the shore, Egle became uneasy. She thought it was strange that the sea was so still. Singing, she called her beloved husband: "Zilvini, Zilvineli, if you are alive send a milky foam. If you are not alive send a bloody foam." Suddenly, the sea moved, and from the very depth there came a bloody foam! Egle heard her husband's sad voice say, "Our little daughter, our smallest, did not keep her word." The daughter, hearing her father's voice, began to quiver. The sons began to cry. Egle, watching the disappearing foam, sadly said, "My little daughter, my young one, would that you turn into a trembling poplar, and you sons, would that you turn into strong trees, and I, your dear mother, will become a fir tree."

As soon as these words were spoken, thus it happened. They all turned into trees which through the ages have spoken to the people of Lithuania. Egle's three sons turned into an oak, an ash and a birch -- the three strongest trees in Lithuania. The daughter turned into a trembling poplar which trembles in the lightest wind. The queen, Egle, became an everlasting green fir tree.

Used with permission from Egle, Zalciu Karaliene, Rackauskiene, R.; Macheviciene, N. Chicago, Illinois: Educational Council, Lithuanian-American Community, Inc., 1986.

Amber

Amber, the "golden gem of the ages," is a gemstone which was sought after by ancient Stone Age sun worshipers because its beautiful radiance reminded them of the sun's rays. In the civilizations of the early Greeks and Romans, amber was so revered it was available only to nobility. Ladies of the Roman court desired it for its brilliant hue and to protect the wearer from evil spirits. Throughout Europe, amber was also worn as a protection against various illnesses. The ancient people of Lithuania treasured amber as highly as gold. Little was known about amber until the age of science when it was discovered to have originated from the sticky resin which flowed from prehistoric trees.

Baltic amber is the most abundant of all ambers and is more often used for ornamental purposes since it is generally harder than other fossil resins. Small deposits have been found in other places throughout the world, however. The amber deposit, dating back 40 million years, forms a stream two to three feet (60-90 cm) thick beneath the clay surface of the seabed. The jagged bottom of icebergs are thought to plough up the seabed and chunks of amber then become caught up in seaweed which is ripped out and dragged ashore by storms. In the spring, fishermen comb the beaches with what look like large shrimping nets to pull in any amber floating in the sea. Amber is buoyant enough to float in salt water. This floating amber receives a semi-polish because of the action of waves and beach sands. The Kursiu Lagoon in Lithuania was once a great source of amber, and in the 19th century, Juodkrante, a village near Kursiu Lagoon, was known as Amber Cove.

Approximately 250 different color varieties of amber are known, although by far the most common hues are yellow, orange and brown. In addition to variations of color, amber can be absolutely transparent or completely cloudy. Amber is brittle and breaks. While it is soft enough to be cut with a pocket knife, it is scarcely scratched by a fingernail. When scraped with a knife, it tends to crumble into a powder. If a lump of amber is rubbed vigorously, the friction causes it to produce enough static electricity to pick up a small particle of tissue paper. (Amber is warm to the touch, since it is a poor conductor of heat.) An interesting feature of amber is that, while it was sticky resin, insects were attracted to it and often became trapped in it. The result is that you can often hold an opaque, polished stone to the light and see flies, mosquitoes, gnats and other insects perfectly preserved inside.

Early Baltic peoples used amber to trade and barter with other civilizations. It has been found in the tombs of Mycenaen kings and the Egyptian pharaohs. King Tutankhamun of Egypt was buried with an amber necklace. The ancient Greek poet Homer was probably thinking of amber when he described the brilliant "electron" on his warriors' shields.

Questions for Review:

1. Why was amber valued as an important material in times past?
2. Explain the connection between each of the following:
   a. pine trees and amber
   b. insects and amber
   c. icebergs and amber
   d. sandy beaches and amber
   e. Egyptian pharaohs and amber
3. Name three countries in which Lithuanian amber has been found.

Used with permission from Amber, The Golden Gem of the Ages, Rice, Patty C. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Co., 1980.

The Legend of Jurate and Kastytis

Many cultures create stories related to natural resources and phenomena; often these stories, or legends, offer explanations of the source of the resource. In Lithuania, early peoples told stories about the amber they found on the shores of the Baltic Sea. In the legend that follows, amber is portrayed as the fruit of a passionate and tragic love.

During ancient times, the fairest of all goddesses was Jurate, the mermaid Goddess of the Sea. Jurate lived in an amber palace at the bottom of the Baltic. Kastytis, a courageous fisherman who lived along the Baltic coast near the mouth of the Sventoji River, often cast his nets to catch fish from Jurate's kingdom. Displeased by this intrusion, Jurate sent her mermaids to warn Kastytis to leave her fish alone and disturb the sea no more.

Paying no heed to her warnings and impervious to the charms of her mermaids, Kastytis continued to cast his nets and bring in fish. Watching the fisherman haul his catch into his boat, Jurate saw how handsome Kastytis was and admired his great courage. Since she was a mermaid and possessed human failings, Jurate fell in love with the mortal, Kastytis, and, in spite of great differences between them, Jurate took the fisherman to her amber palace.

Perkunas was the God of Thunder and the father of all gods. He had promised Patrimpas, God of Water, that Jurate would be his wife, and he therefore became greatly angered upon discovering the immortal goddess in love with a mere mortal. In his fury, Perkunas sent a shaft of lightning from the skies, striking Jurate's palace, demolishing it into thousands of fragments, and killing her beloved Kastytis. Jurate, crying tears of amber for Kastytis and their tragic love, was punished by being chained to the ruins of her castle.

The legend says that when storms churn the Baltic, Jurate is being tossed to and fro by the waves. To this day people sometimes say that the sound of Jurate wailing in the depths can still be heard as she mourns for Kastytis, a son of the earth. As she cries, the peaceful depths of the sea grow restless and stormy, and lumps of amber from her demolished palace are spewed up from the sea bottom, become entangled in seaweed, and are thrown out onto the Baltic shores.

To Lithuanians, the small, tear-shaped pieces of amber are the tears of Jurate, as clear and pure as her tragic love. The legend lives today through a variety of beautiful sculptures, wood carvings and pictures and mosaics set with amber.

Questions to Consider:

1. What geographic characteristics of Lithuania are mentioned in this tale?
2. What is the folk explanation for amber being found in tear-shaped pieces?
3. How does this folktale explain the appearance of amber after ocean storms? How does this explanation differ from the scientific explanation (see the essay, "Amber")?

Used with permission from Zdane, Elena. Jurate and Kastytis. Victoria, Australia, 1988.

Riddles, Riddles Everywhere

Lithuanians have always loved riddles and believe that the aim of riddles is to develop a child's ability to observe and think. Read each of the riddles below and with your group decide which answer you think would be the best one. Write the letter of your match in the space provided.

_____1. Though it lies day and night it never rots.	a. shadow
_____2. It passes through fire but it does not burn, it passes through water but does not sink, it passes through straw but it does not rustle.	b. stone
_____3. It has a mouth of bone, a beard of flesh. It is born twice, dies once.	c. tongue
_____4. A beggar comes clad in rags with patches all over him, but water will not drench him.	d. rooster
_____5. The father of riddles lies in a pool.	e. goose
_____6. When the mother hides, the father comes out.	f. fire and smoke
_____7. Upon breaking the ice you find silver, upon breaking silver you find gold.	g. nose
_____8. A brother lives between two sisters.	h. egg
_____9. It has flesh all around and a tummy of stone.	i. sun and moon
_____10. The father has not yet been born, but the son has gone gray.	j. cherry

Lithuanian Timeline

Below is a timeline depicting major episodes of political and cultural change that Lithuanians have experienced over the past 500 years. Consult this timeline when responding to the questions on the worksheet, "Centuries of Change."

1300s	*Geopolitical Change:* Lithuania expands territory to Moscow in the east and to the Black Sea in the south. *Cultural consequence:* Lithuania becomes an economic powerhouse. Trade increases cultural contact with Europe.
1569	*Geopolitical change:* Grand Duke Jogaila unites Poland and Lithuania in 1569 as a defense against attacks from Russia in the east. *Cultural consequence:* Lithuanian territory sometimes referred to as Poland; national identity is lost.
Late 1700s	*Geopolitical change:* Territory is annexed by Russia and divided up among several nations. *Cultural consequence:* Russia imposes its language, bans publication of Lithuanian language books, and imposes the Eastern Orthodox Christian religion on Lithuania.
1915-1918	*Geopolitical change:* Germany annexes and occupies Lithuanian territory. Lithuania declares its independence on February 16, 1918. *Cultural consequence:* Land reform causes break-up of large estates and land is distributed to the poor. Public education is established.
1940-1941	*Geopolitical change:* The Soviet Union annexes Lithuanian territory from Lithuania. *Cultural consequence:* Lithuanian government is overthrown and a communist government with communist values is instated.

1941-1944	*Geopolitical change:* Nazis occupy Lithuania. *Cultural consequence:* Over 160,000 Lithuanians and Lithuanian Jews are sent to concentration camps because of their religious and political beliefs.
1944-1970	*Geopolitical change:* Despite resistance from Lithuanians, the Soviet Union reasserts control over the territory. *Cultural consequence*: About 350,000 Lithuanians are sent to labor camps in Siberia for their political beliefs or as punishment for resisting Soviet rule. All private property is seized by the state. Children are taught Soviet history in schools. Atheism is imposed and churches are seized.
1970-1980	*Geopolitical change:* Lithuanian students and workers demonstrate against the Soviet government. Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev calls for more openness in Soviet society. *Cultural consequence:* Lithuanians set up *Sajudis,* a non-Communist movement to regain control of Lithuania's economy, citizenship, education, and cultural development. Environmental clean-up begins. New Soviet parliament is established in Lithuania and elections are held.
1990	*Geopolitical change:* As political debate becomes more open, Lithuanians press for full independence and declare laws adopted by Soviet parliament invalid. Full independence is declared on March 11, 1990. *Cultural consequence:* Lithuanian is restored as the national language, freedom of religion is permitted, and freedom of the press is regained.

Centuries of Change

Consult the "Lithuanian Timeline" and a map of Europe to answer the following questions.

1. Of the countries which seized Lithuania, which countries were west of Lithuania? How many were east of Lithuania?

2. How many episodes of Lithuanian independence do you note on this timeline? About how many total years do these episodes represent out of the last 500 years of Lithuanian history?

3. Why has Lithuania's territory has been so fought over by various powers? Consider the role of Lithuania's geography in terms of :

   a. location in Europe
   b. physical features
   c. natural resources

4. Make some predictions about the long-term consequences of such continuous geopolitical upheaval on:

   a. movement of Lithuanians in and out of the country
   b. state of the Lithuanian economy
   c. Lithuanian cultural attitudes toward:
      - war and peace
      - neighboring countries
      - political freedom

5. Why do you think Lithuanians continued to fight for independence after so many generations of being part of other countries? In other words, why have they resisted cultural assimilation all these years?

The Lithuanian Language

The Lithuanian language is one of the oldest spoken languages in the world. It is classified as a Northern Indo-European language, which is a branch that includes the Slavic and Germanic languages. Two Baltic languages, Lithuanian and Lettish, or Latvian, survive. It took three thousand years for the language which is spoken today to develop. Its written form has existed since the late 16th century and is spoken by more than three million people. Lithuanian has retained more features of the original Indo-European language than any other surviving language.

The Lithuanian language is rich in word meaning and description. One of the differences between English and Lithuanian is Lithuanian's use of diminutive words. For example, the Lithuanian word for "girl" is *mergaite.* "Little girl" is *mergele* or *mergyte.* By adding the diminutive form to the end of the word, its meaning is changed. Another difference is that many Lithuanian words are used to describe mother: *motina, motinele, mociute, mamute, mamutele, motinyte, motule, mamaite, and mamuciuke.*

Since Lithuanian is spoken by a relatively small number of people, it is not known widely throughout the world. It is of interest to scholars or linguists, however, because of its origins, the number of declensions, and its two principal dialects, Samogitian, or Low Lithuanian and High Lithuanian. These ancient dialects have been further refined, and the western dialect of High Lithuanian has become the basis for the modern literary language.

The Lithuanian language, throughout its history, has had to struggle against foreign attempts to belittle, suppress and annihilate it. During each suppression, the home played an important role in sustaining the language. Mothers spoke, sang lullabies and taught their children to speak and read the language. Indeed, Lithuanians maintain that one cannot remain a true Lithuanian without the Lithuanian language. Educated Lithuanians understood this as far back as the 16th century and resolved to combat the disdain and destruction of the Lithuanian tongue. Canon Mikalojus Daukas, the first author of *Lithuania Proper,* published in Vilnius in 1599, addressed his readers with the following:

> ". . .Nations survive not because of their soil's fertility, the diversity of their clothing or the strength of their cities and fortresses, but primarily by preserving and using their own language which increases and sustains a common foundation, harmony and brotherly love."

During the years of occupation by the Soviet Union, the underground movement stressed knowledge of the Lithuanian language. In the underground publication *Ausra,* in February 1979, appeared the following:

> "While fighting our oppressors over the centuries, we managed to survive only because we preserved and protected our native tongue. . . . Let us remember that the fate of our language is the fate of our nation. If we do not respond today to the challenge fate has laid down for us, Lithuania may very well be completely removed from the future course of history. Let us do everything possible to protect our native tongue."

During this same time period, children and students were taught in Russian and spoke Russian in school. However, they continued the study of their native Lithuanian at home. Since the declaration of independence, Lithuanian has been restored as the national language and is now used in elementary schools as well as in institutions of higher learning. Students today learn Lithuanian as their primary language while they study English, German, Russian, French and other foreign languages as a part of their education.

Lithuanians living abroad believe that preserving their language is their first concern. Lithuanian organizations, Saturday schools, churches, and newspapers strive to maintain the language. For example, Chicago, Illinois, which has the largest population of Lithuanians outside Lithuania, maintains two large Saturday schools and a university-level school for future scholars of the language and teachers. Students come to these schools having a basic knowledge of the language because their families have passed it on to them. Second and even third generation Lithuanians pride themselves on knowing their native tongue.

Used with permission from the following sources: Lithuania My Heritage, Vijeikis, Vladas. Chicago, Illinois. 1989; The Lithuanians, Kudirka, Jouzas. Vilnius, Lithuania: Lithuania Folk Culture Center, 1991.

The Tragedy of Darius and Girenas

In the history of American aviation, the era between 1919 and 1939 is called the era of "Atlantic Fever." In the days when aeronautical technology progressed rapidly, the establishment of regular air traffic over the Atlantic was only a matter of time. Many nationalities living in the United States and having their roots in Europe tried to contribute to the building of this aerial bridge. Stephen Darius and Stanley Girenas, two Lithuanian-American pilots living in Chicago, decided to fly nonstop from New York to Kaunas, Lithuania. Their goal was to emphasize the close spiritual ties between Lithuanian-Americans and their homeland.

Stephen Darius was born on January 8, 1896 in Lithuania. In 1907 he emigrated to the United States with the rest of his family. In 1917, Darius entered the armed forces and during World War I served in the American Expeditionary Forces in France. He was awarded two medals for distinctive service and bravery.

In July 1920, Darius went to Lithuania and entered military school, and later, he joined the Air Force of the newly independent country. While serving in the Lithuanian Air Force, Darius introduced various American games such as baseball, basketball, boxing and hockey to his colleagues and friends. In May 1927, with a group of other enthusiasts, Darius founded the American Club of Lithuania.

In 1927, Darius returned to the United States and bought a three-seater airplane. With it he delivered newsreel movie films, participated in the air-race across the United States, founded South Bend airport, and established both an air cargo and air mail company and a flying school. While flying in Chicago, Darius met another talented and enthusiastic pilot of Lithuanian descent named Stanley Girch (who later changed his name back to Girenas).

Stanley Girenas was born on October 4, 1893, in Lithuania. The 16th child in his family, he, and his brother Peter, emigrated to the United States in 1910. When World War I broke out, he joined the armed forces and served as an airplane mechanic in Kelly and Love Fields in Texas. In 1924, he learned to fly and became a very proficient pilot, excelling in aerobatics. He was a very good flying instructor and he gave air rides to thousands of passengers.

In June 1932, Darius and Girenas pooled their assets and purchased a Bellanca CH-300 Pacemaker airplane. (The Bellanca Pacemaker was the most popular type of airplane for transatlantic flights.) Both pilots announced their intention to fly nonstop from the United States to Lithuania, and their famous "testament" was also announced.

Because meteorological and communications equipment was crude and very unreliable, and because of the low reliability of the airplanes and their engines, crossing the Atlantic was extremely risky. The risk of death to the transatlantic flyers was at least as great as the risks modern astronauts face today.

Purchasing an airplane and making it suitable for a transatlantic flight required a major investment which Darius and Girenas could not make themselves. Flight Sponsoring Committees were organized in Chicago, Newark, Brooklyn and many other Lithuanian communities in the United States; these in turn organized fund-raising air shows with aerobatics, parachute jumps and passenger rides.

On January 30, 1933 the Bellanca was moved to the E.M. Laird workshops near Chicago's Municipal airport. The plane was fitted with elongated wings, new gasoline tanks, reinforced landing gear, a new engine and new fabric. Due to weight considerations and the lack of funds, the plane was not equipped with parachutes or radios. On May 6, the rebuilt airplane was christened the *Lituanica,* and the following day Darius and Girenas lifted off for New York.

At Floyd Bennet Field in New York, Darius and Girenas were greeted by a crowd of newspaper reporters and cameramen. They waited for favorable weather conditions and finally on July 14th, they took off on their 4466-mile, 40-hour flight to Kaunas, Lithuania. Stephen Darius was 37 years old, with 1759 hours of flying experience and Stanley Girenas was 39, with 1243 hours of flying experience.

After successfully crossing the Atlantic, the *Lituanica* crashed in a pine forest near Soldin, Germany, and both pilots were killed. The distance between New York and the scene of the crash was 3984 miles (second longest flight distance on record at the time), only 404 miles short of their goal. Total time flown was 37 hours and 11 minutes.

Rumors spread about the possibility that the pilots had been shot down by the Nazis. A possible cause of the tragedy, as stated by a special Lithuanian board of investigation, was "unfavorable weather conditions combined with defects in engine operation." However, the actual cause of the crash has never been determined.

Some 60,000 residents in Kaunas participated in the funeral procession. The bodies of both pilots were thoroughly examined and embalmed, and a mausoleum in Kaunas' cemetery was erected. The final funeral for Darius and Girenas took place in 1964. The remains of the *Lituanica* were examined and placed in the War Museum in Kaunas, where they are still today.

Monuments honoring Darius and Girenas are standing in Chicago, Brooklyn, Anyksciai (Lithuania), and Soldin (Poland today). A 70-foot monument was unveiled on July 17, 1993 in Kaunas. Lithuania issued a special series of postage stamps, and renamed hundreds of streets, dozens of bridges, squares and schools to honor the pilots. Thousands of newly born boys were given Darius' name.

Sixty years after the historical flight, Darius and Girenas are still held in high esteem. The idealism shown by Darius and Girenas and the meaningful words of the "testament" still continue to inspire the young people of Lithuania toward noble deeds.

Adapted with permission from: Program Commemoration of the Flight of Darius and Girenas, Ramonis, Val. Ed. Chicago, Illinois: Questar Printing, 1993.

Basketball's High Flyer

The game at which Lithuania excels is basketball. Lithuania has long provided the best players for the Soviet team and the Kaunas team has twice been USSR champions. Seven Lithuanians have Olympic gold medals and the national team took home a bronze in Barcelona in 1992. A handful of Lithuanians are top players in the United States, including Sarunas Marciulionis, who has put his money into a successful small hotel in Vilnius.

The history of the game in Lithuania begins with one of the country's great heroes, Steponas Darius. The village of Rubiske near the coast, where he was born in 1896, has since changed its name to Darius. In 1907, with his mother and step-father, he emigrated to the United States. As a student he excelled at baseball and football as well as basketball. He signed up for the army in 1917 and fought in France, where he was wounded; he then returned to the United States with two decorations. In 1920 he was one of the United States' volunteers for the Lithuanian army and as a pilot he took part in the liberation of occupied Klaipeda. He was a champion sportsman in his native country, where he introduced basketball and laid down a sporting tradition that has continued ever since.

He returned to the United States in 1927 and worked in civil aviation, founding a Lithuanian flying club, called Vytis. Five years later he and a colleague and mechanic, Stasys Girenas, set out to bring fame and glory to their newly independent nation by embarking on an epic flight from New York to Lithuania. They had great trouble scraping together the money, but eventually had enough to buy an old plane they called *Lituanica*. There was no money left over to buy any radio equipment.

The plane left New York on July 15, 1933 and flew across the Atlantic, covering 3,984 miles in thirty-seven hours and eleven minutes. Nobody knows exactly why, but it never reached Lithuania and crashed in Soldin in Germany. At the time there was friction between the two countries, and rumors that the plane might have been deliberately brought down did not improve international relations. The pilots' bodies were brought to Kaunas, then the provisional capital, and 60,000 people turned out for their funeral.

Their deaths were not in vain; many felt the flight had put Lithuania on the map. The duo's portraits appeared on postage stamps, and 300 streets, eighteen bridges and eight schools were named after them, and many of these survived the Soviet period.

One of the monuments to the heroes is near Anyksciasi on a huge boulder called Puntukas. This is one of the country's mythical stones which has been a landmark from time immemorial. In 1943, a Lithuanian sculptor, Bronius Pundzius, was in the countryside hiding from the Nazis and he made himself a shelter beside the boulder. While there he began to sculpt a relief of the faces of the two pilots into the stone, adding the text of their will, which had been written before they embarked on the historic flight.

Remnants of their airplane and some of their personal effects are on display in the Historical Museum in Kaunas, in the same building as the M.K. Ciulionis Art Gallery. On the main road four miles from Klapedia, a signpost marked "S. Darius teviski" leads to the village and a new memorial musuem.

Used with permission from Insight Guide to the Baltic States, Williams, Roger, London, U.K.: APA Publications, 1993.

The Tragedy: Questions for Thought

Answer the following questions after reading "The Tragedy of Darius and Girenas."

1. Why was an aerial crossing of the Atlantic considered such a risky venture in the era between 1919 and 1939?

2. Which Americans were particularly interested in the building of this "aerial bridge?" What might have been some of the reasons for their interest?

3. Why might Lithuania particularly have attached such cultural importance to this undertaking? (Recall what you know about Lithuania's history, culture, and geography in answering this question).

4. "Although an immigrant, Darius was enthusiastic and committed to being an American." Cite evidence from the account to support this view.

5. "Despite emigrating from Lithuania, Darius continued to show special allegiance to his homeland." Cite evidence from this account to support this view.

6. In essay form explain the following:
Stephen Darius spent most of his life in America, yet his life and death had a lasting effect on the culture and geography of Lithuania.

Flight Testament

We shall fly to Lithuania!

The Lithuanian nation expects of her sons even more courageous deeds. It befits her sons to join in the common task--to explore the as yet little known air currents of the North Atlantic Ocean, to inquire into the new methods of navigation and adopt them to ordinary daily usage. We, who are living in an era when air is being conquered for the use and benefit of mankind, feel it our duty to do our part honorably in the name of our nation.

Young Lithuania! Inspired by your spirit, we try to accomplish our chosen task. May our success strengthen your spirit and your confidence in your own power and talent! But if Neptune or the mighty, stormy Perkunas would be angry at us, - would prevent our passage to Young Lithuania, and would call LITUANICA to himself, - then you, Young Lithuania, will once again have to determine, sacrifice and prepare yourself for a new journey, so that the gods of the tempestuous oceans are satisfied by your efforts and determination, and will not call you to the Last Judgment.

May the victory of LITUANICA strengthen the spirit of the young sons of Lithuania and inspire them for new deeds.

Let LITUANICA 'S defeat and its sinking to the depths of the Atlantic Ocean teach young Lithuanians courage and determination, so that a Winged Lithuanian conquers the treacherous Atlantic for the glory of our homeland Lithuania.

To You, Young Lithuania, we dedicate and offer this flight!

We will begin this great experiment with the hope of Heaven's blessing!

Used with permission from: Program Commemoration of the Flight of Darius and Girenas, Ramonis, Val. Ed. Chicago, Illinois: Questar Printing, 1993.

Interpreting the Testament

Read the "Flight Testament," then think about and respond to the following questions.

1. In one or two sentences each, paraphrase the meanings of the first and second paragraphs of the "testament."

2. Circle specific words or short phrases in paragraphs one and two that give the writing a certain "heroic" or "dramatic" tone.

3. For whom do you think this testament was written? If more than one audience, specify them.

4. For what purpose(s) do you think this testament was written?

5. In what specific ways does the testament allude to Lithuanian cultural traditions? Why do you think it does this?

6. Why does the testament refer to Lithuania as "Young Lithuania?" What connection, if any, does this give to the strength of Darius' and Girenas' ambitions?

7. Naturally, the testament hopes for a successful journey. Even before the flight, however, Darius and Girenas were already preparing Lithuanians for the other eventuality. How does this testament turn even the prospect of failure into an occasion for cultural glory?

Keeping Culture Alive

Working in pairs, match each Lithuanian way described below with a U.S. equivalent. Ask yourself: What do these two ways have in common? Discuss whether the statement describes something related to beliefs and values, written and oral traditions, artistic expression, or other aspects of culture. Note: The first one has been done for you.

Lithuania

__D__ 1. Lithuanians pass down many Lithuanian folk tales about the sea and nature to their children.

_____ 2. Mushroom dishes are a favorite food of many Lithuanians.

_____ 3. Even during Soviet rule when Russian was to be spoken, Lithuanians kept their language alive in the home.

_____ 4. Lithuanians have always celebrated the special holiday of St. Casimir.

_____ 5. Lithuanians pride themselves in knowing the many steps of "Malunas," a special folk dance depicting the mill at work.

_____ 6. Despite an official policy of atheism under Soviet rule, many Lithuanians continued to follow the Roman Catholic faith of their ancestors.

_____ 7. Although occupied by the Soviet Union for almost 50 years, many Lithuanians preferred to still give their babies Lithuanian names like Uosis (Oak--boy's name) or Ausra (Dawn--girl's name) instead of Soviet ones.

_____ 8. Lithuanians continue to wear special clothing (national costume) for special occasions such as song festivals and dance festivals and even weddings.

The United States

a. Irish immigrants to the U.S. have celebrated St. Patrick's Day with such enthusiasm that now many other Americans celebrate it as well.

b. Although fluent in English, some Chinese-Americans encourage their children to speak Chinese at home or to attend Saturday classes in that language.

c. A religious people descended from German people, the Amish continue to express their distinct identity by very plain and simple clothing.

d. Native Americans have a rich heritage of nature tales.

e. Many Mexican-Americans especially enjoy foods such as tamale, enchilada, and mole.

f. Arab-Americans living around Detroit gather together to celebrate Ramadan, a Muslim Holy month of fasting and prayer.

g. Many people are familiar with the distinct traditional dances of Native Hawaiians.

h. A recent tradition among some African-Americans is to bestow African names on their children, in recognition of their cultural roots.

Human Interaction with the Environment

Humans, like all other life forms, depend on the unique relationships of the biosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and lithosphere. We need air to breathe, water to drink, and land to grow the food we eat. But the balance between people and place is fragile. When humans interact with the natural environment there are always consequences. Some of these are intended; some are not. Some consequences are positive and beneficial; some are negative and costly.

For the inhabitants of Lithuania, the beautiful and tempting blue expanse of the Baltic Sea, with its lazy curving beaches, is no longer pure. Into this sea flows the urban and chemical waste from the Baltic States and beyond.

Marine life has suffered as a direct result of Soviet fishing policies. The natural balance has been destroyed by overfishing, and during the 1980s spawning fish levels in the entire Baltic fell by more than 50 percent. In the past 20 years the concentrations of nitrate from improperly treated waste water have trebled and quadrupled during the winter months. This has increased organic material on the sea bottom, which has reduced oxygen levels and led to the decline in numbers of fish. Stocks of whitefish and smelt have dropped, and cod reproduction has been seriously affected.

Naturalists say that some of the Soviet mismanagement of coastal areas has actually protected the whole coast from development. For nearly two generations, most coast land remained unused. For the first time in 50 years, people are re-discovering beautiful beaches, especially the dune-backed Neringa Spit. Soviet control also saved large tracts of woodland and wildlife, sustaining habitats that have completely disappeared elsewhere in Europe. Fortunately, Lithuania has several natural parks and special areas set aside for the study of plants, animals, and geological sites.

Energy is a crucial question, and the search for it has been a major contributor to the pollution of Lithuania and the other Baltic states. The Chernobyl nuclear disaster in Ukraine stirred fear in Lithuania and other Baltic states, not only because the 1986 explosion caused fallout across the three countries, but also because a plant of similar design was under construction in Ignalina, Lithuania. No geographic survey or seismic studies were carried out before the plant was started. Two reactors are now up and running, but plans for another two at the same site were halted following demonstrations organized in 1988 by the Lithuanian Greens, an environmental group, and the pro-independence *Sajudis* movement.

Lithuania has no natural fuel resources and consumes twice as much energy as it produces at the Ignalina nuclear station and at a thermoelectric power plant in Elektrenai near Vilnius. Officials do not plan to close down Ignalina, which produces more than half the electricity generated in Lithuania, but, with the help of Swedish and American experts, they are trying to increase the reactors' safety. Little has been done to promote heat and light conservation at home. Windows are badly fitted and buildings are poorly insulated. Government attempts to control fuel use during energy shortages have not been successful. Lithuania's forests are already threatened by a burgeoning black market for timber exports, and with the fuel crisis, they will increasingly be looked to for fuel to heat homes during the long, dark days of winter. Wood and peat currently supply about four percent of Lithuania's energy needs.

The Lithuanian Ministry of the Environment says that waste water treatment in many towns is obsolete and in need of repair, but lack of money remains the obstacle to renovation. In Lithuania about 40 percent of all well water is unsuitable for drinking because it contains large amounts of organic substances, oil products, ammonia, pesticides, and detergents.

The metallurgical, chemical, and fertilizer industries and oil shale, cement, cellulose, and paper companies built during the Soviet era produce great amounts of air, water, and soil pollution in Lithuania. Trans-boundary pollution is also a concern. Lithuania's cement plant in Akemene and an oil refinery and power station in Mazeikai send air pollution to Latvia. The Nemunas River receives industrial pollutants and waste from Kaliningrad Oblast.

Water and air pollution affect everyone's lives, not only in Lithuania and the Baltic states, but throughout the world.

Adapted with permission from Insight Guide to the Baltic States, Williams, Roger. London, U.K.: APA Publications, 1993.

Out of Balance

The ecological changes described in the information sheet, "Human Interaction with the Environment" all have human (or "anthropogenic") rather than natural causes. Complete the chart below indicating the environmental problem related to the aspect of the environment listed. Note the probable human causes of each problem, as well as the effect this problem has on the ecology of the area. Finally, note the effect of this ecological change on humans and their culture.

Aspect of Environment	Problem	Human Cause(s)	Effects on Ecology	Consequences for Humans
Air				
Land				
Vegetation and Wildlfe				
Water				

Out of Balance: Think About It

Discuss these questions in small groups and come to agreement. Record your answers to share with the class. Answers between groups may vary, so be prepared to defend your responses. Consult your chart, "Out of Balance."

1. Of the <u>environmental problems</u> noted on your chart:

   - Which are primarily the result of local (i.e., within Lithuania) causes?
   - Which are primarily the result of regional (i.e., European) causes?
   - Which are primarily the result of international (i.e., global) causes?

2. Of the <u>human causes</u> noted on your chart:

   - Which are related to meeting basic needs for food and water? How?
   - Which are related to industrial development? How?

3. Of the <u>human causes</u> noted on your chart:

   - Which would be least difficult for people to change? Why?
   - Which would be the most difficult? Why?

4. Of the <u>effects on ecology</u> noted on your chart:

   - Which of these effects would be easiest to reverse? Why?
   - Which would be most difficult to reverse? Why?
   - Which do you believe to be the most urgent problem? Why?

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Map of Lithuania

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Map of Europe

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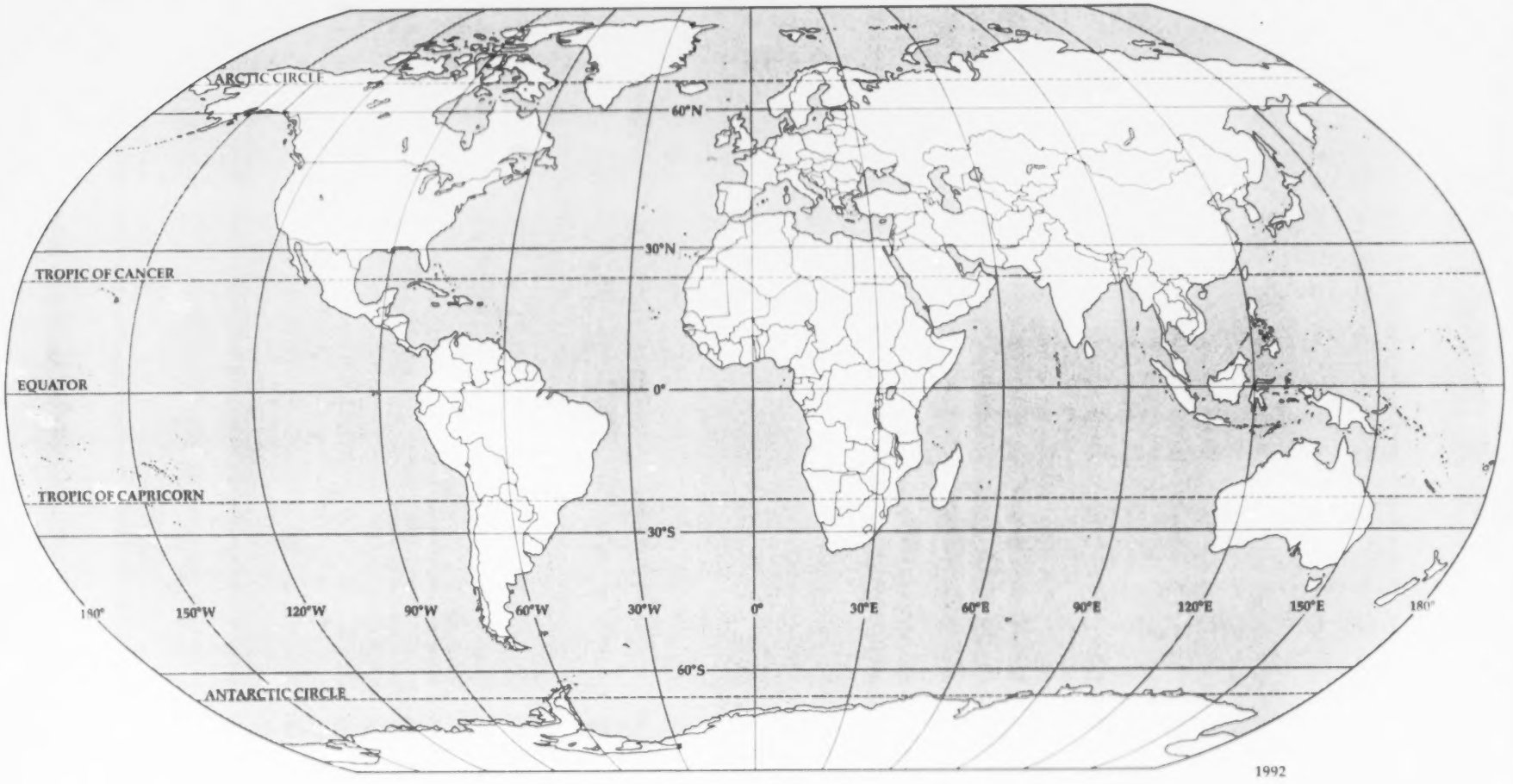

Political World

0 1000 2000 3000 4000 MILES

0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 6000 KILOMETERS

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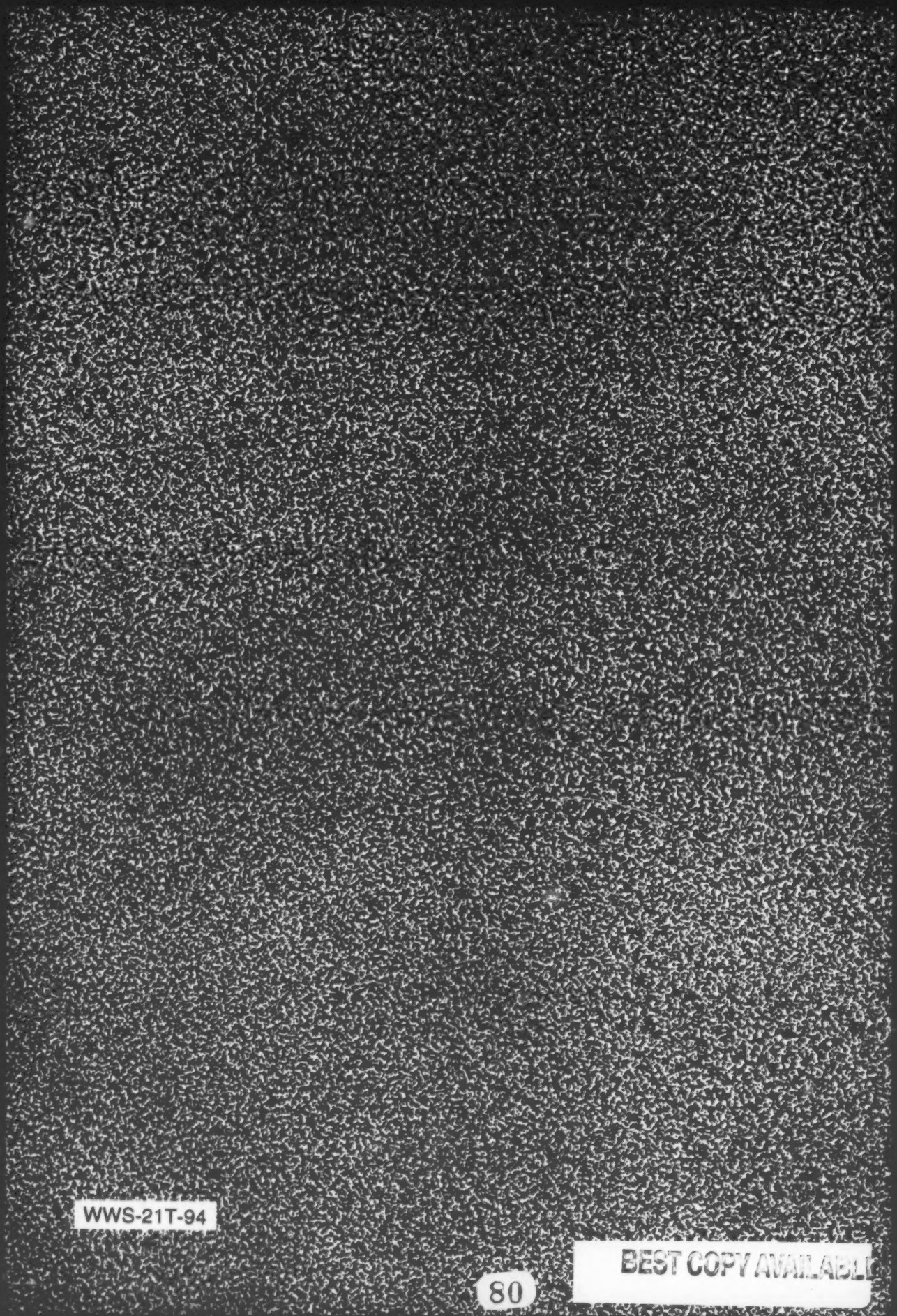

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